

**The Report Committee for Robert Allan Dearden
Certifies that this is the approved version of the following report:**

Seeing The Forest for the Trees

**APPROVED BY
SUPERVISING COMMITTEE:**

Supervisor:

Cynthia A. McCreery

Charles Ramirez-Berg

Seeing “The Forest for the Trees”

by

Robert Allan Dearden

Report

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of

The University of Texas at Austin

in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements

for the Degree of

Master of Fine Arts

The University of Texas at Austin

August 2013

Abstract

Seeing The Forest for the Trees

Robert Allan Dearden, MFA

The University of Texas at Austin, 2013

Supervisor: Cynthia A. McCreery

This report documents the creation and development of the television pilot “The Forest for the Trees.” It chronicles the processes by which the writer tried, erred, and once in a while succeeded in writing a script with which he is moderately satisfied.

Table of Contents

Chapter One: Feels Like the First Time	1
Chapter Two: Second That Emotion	5
Chapter Three: A Brand New Bag	9
Chapter Four: Hurts So Good.....	12
Chapter Five: Too Many Fish in the Sea.....	18
Chapter Six: Please Allow Me to Re-Introduce Myself.....	21
Chapter Seven: One More Chance	25
Chapter Eight: The Rising	29
Chapter Nine: The Long and Winding Road	31
Appendix A: Original Recipe.....	32
Appendix B: Original - Teaser and Act One	34
Appendix C: Second Iteration - Bible	52
Appendix D: Second Iteration - Outline	55
Appendix E: Thesis - Process Paper	60
Appendix F: Thesis - First Treatment	61
Appendix G: Thesis - Second Outline.....	76
Appendix H: Thesis - Outline Revisions and Notes	86
Appendix I: Scene Comparisons - Three Versions	97
Bibliography	100

CHAPTER ONE: FEELS LIKE THE FIRST TIME

If I stretch far enough, I can make a case that the genesis of this script can be traced back to two seemingly unrelated events in 1997. The first was the release of the film *Good Will Hunting*, which made screenwriting look like an easy way to break into show business in one's spare time, and therefore a worthwhile pursuit for an eager yet lazy young undergrad. This was the beginning of my screenwriting career, in the loosest sense of the term. Sadly, immediate success was not forthcoming, and I was forced to turn to more practical pursuits in order to make a living. This brings me to the second event of that fateful year: my first season as a treeplanter. The story of this script's development is twofold: the process of learning the craft of screenwriting and of writing the script, obviously, first and foremost; but also the evolution of my own experience in the world in which the story is set, and which motivated the script in the first place (and possibly my pursuit of screenwriting to begin with as well). In the spirit of chronology, let us begin with the world that inspired me to write this story.

Treeplanting is a uniquely Canadian rite-of-passage that attracts thousands of young, eager, foolish men and women from across the country to the Boreal forests of the north. For most, it is a seasonal job that pays relatively well and happens to match up with the summer break schedule of most colleges and universities. This is also what appealed to me about treeplanting, and how I became involved; somehow, over the next fifteen years, it managed to accidentally evolve into a full time career. The appeal of the job took instant hold – from my first summer season in Northern Ontario, I immediately felt both at home and invigorated. The work was (and remains) difficult. Treeplanters spend at least nine hours a day on their feet, with forty pounds of seedlings slung over their backs, traveling back and forth over the rough terrain of logged cutblocks, striving always to work harder, faster and smarter in order to plant more trees

and therefore earn more money. The living conditions are equally rough: remote, temporary campsites, set up by the planters themselves, often hours from the nearest hint of civilization. Among the constant concerns both at camp and at work are the variety of weather conditions (and lack of refuge from them), wildlife encroachment, repetitive stress injuries, and general health and hygiene maintenance. That's not to mention the difficulties in learning out how to navigate the social landmine that is a treeplanting camp, where approximately forty to a hundred young adults live in quarters that are often far too close, every day for three months, and where very few of the rules of polite society apply. Needless to say, none of this was a deterrent to me; on the contrary, these challenges were a large part of the appeal of this work environment and lifestyle. I migrated west in the first few years of my career, when I still considered it a seasonal job, to Saskatchewan, then Alberta, and finally settled in British Columbia. After I finished my undergraduate degree, I was free to extend my treeplanting work into the early spring and fall months, gradually edging closer to more of a full-time commitment. I mentioned planting as a *lifestyle* earlier, as this is what it becomes for those that continue this pursuit beyond their college years. The money is decent, especially when one has no dependents (save for the obligatory dog, a must-have accessory when working in the bush). It becomes very easy to work for a portion of the year – six months, for instance – then spend the rest of the year spending every dime you have earned in the pursuit of your choosing, perhaps backpacking in Central America, or becoming a ski-bum in the Rockies. It becomes something of a cycle, wherein one works very hard for a period of time in order to not have to work at all for a long stretch. This cycle can be very addictive (and enjoyable), but does not enable practicalities such as the saving of money, or the acquisition of further skills toward any other career. In many cases, the cycle becomes virtually inescapable, as treeplanting becomes a recurring necessity every spring. This partly

explains my fifteen years in the business, as I did my share of traveling and general laying about over the winter months. However, I also ascended whatever meager ladder exists in the treeplanting world, and began to take on a more supervisory, management role. It is at this point that the job evolved into more of a legitimate career for me, and coincidentally it is also at this point that I realized this was not necessarily something I wanted to do for the rest of my life.

In my youth, a career in film was, abstractly, the path I assumed I would be taking. My undergraduate studies were never particularly focused, per se, but in so far as I had a future career in mind, I knew I wanted to work in film. At the time, I entertained the notion of applying to graduate film schools, but that was put off for fear of incurring further student loans when the first batch was still outstanding, among other concerns. I had written a few plays and one feature-length script in my spare time at this point, and I had even flirted briefly with the notion of an acting career, but my primary concern was paying the bills, and so back to the bush I went. This was the summer of 2002, my third season treeplanting, and the idea was to work steadily for a few more years, pay off my loans and save up enough money to get back on the film school path, or frankly any other that might have captured my interest. My energies, at this point, were not directed strongly toward any one goal. Fast-forward ten years: my loans are paid off, but any dreams of working in film or television have been all but forgotten. I was visiting a friend in Los Angeles, somewhat ironically, during my down time that winter, when the seeds were finally sewn to reinvigorate these dreams. My friend is an actress, and she took me to a party one night populated almost exclusively by other actors. One of her friends asked what I do for a living, and I replied that I worked in forestry. His response was: “Okay, but you’re a writer.” I have no idea why he drew that conclusion. It may have been something he assumed from the nature or content of our conversation (of which I have no recollection), or perhaps my friend had already discussed

me in those terms. Either way, that was all it took. I had never intended my forestry career to become such a full-time, long-term commitment, so I was already predisposed to an alternative. But it was this random stranger's assumption that led me to question myself: Why am I not a writer? So at this point, finally, after years of relegating this notion to the back burner, I started dipping my toes back into the screenwriting pool. Much earlier, in the aforementioned aftermath of *Good Will Hunting*, I had read a few of the requisite screenwriting how-to texts. My first step at this point was to reintroduce myself to that section of my bookshelf; my second was to sit down and start typing. In that moment, the only subject I felt comfortable and compelled to explore in script form was the world in which I had been immersed for so long. I am not sure I ever fully bought into the mantra of "write what you know," but I certainly had a multitude of real-world treeplanting experiences, events and characters from which to draw. At this stage of my process, that was both reassuring and inspiring. Mainly because I had so much to say about this world, I decided that its story was best served by the medium of a television series rather than a feature film, and so I set about writing a pilot. And then I wrote the second episode... and then the third. I believe I stopped at the seventh or eighth episode, but I was really on a roll – and I had not the slightest idea what I was doing. Those first scripts were written in Microsoft Word – I am not sure I had even heard of screenwriting software at that point – and they were completely devoid of structure, balance, and in general, craft. I sent the pilot to my actress friend for feedback; she did not reply (and still has yet to mention it, and hopefully never will). These early scripts' value to me, however, has been immeasurable, as they solidified once again the notion that screenwriting was what I wanted to do – and reinforced that I had a lot to learn before that dream could become a reality.

CHAPTER TWO: SECOND THAT EMOTION

The next attempt I made at writing my treeplanting series pilot was in the first television writing class I had ever taken, during my second semester of graduate school. In the couple of years since my first attempt, I had taken a few online screenwriting classes and, in my spare time, tried to apply those lessons in revising my original pilot. There were some moments, maybe even a scene or two, of which I was proud, but it was still severely lacking in focus and structure. The ideas of proper plotting and pacing, and of the basic math of television writing were all unknown to me. What I felt confident in – and still do to a greater extent than with my writing – is my ability to recognize and appreciate quality work when I see it. It may be a bit of a cliché for latch-key kids that grew up in the Eighties, but I honestly feel that television had a huge influence on how I grew up. As such, I felt I at least had an abstract idea of what constituted good television, and what kind of material I wished to emulate. I knew what I wanted to accomplish in the broadest sense, and what kind of show I wanted this to be – even if I had little idea how to get there.

The most difficult aspect of graduate school, to my surprise, has been the relatively terrible tastes of my fellow students. I say that facetiously to some extent, but it really amazed me to find out that the slight generational gap between myself and most of my peers resulted in a concerted lack of awareness on their part of all the great television shows I had known growing up. I am sure that most everyone assumes the pop culture material from their youth is representative of the greatest era in movies, music, television, etc.; I am equally sure that I am of the generation that it is unequivocally correct in this assumption. My subconscious influences and those that I try to overtly, shamelessly copy are all from this era. With regard to television specifically, this was the last great era of the multi-camera sitcom. Though this is neither the time

nor the place, I would argue that these sitcoms featured some of the best writing about families, politics, and relationships in the history of television, up to and including the supposed “Golden Age” in which we reside currently. As one example, I look to *Cheers* as an aspirational model when trying to write any scenes of romantic comedy; in earlier drafts of *The Forests For The Trees*, the characters now known as Mooney and Ali were written as my version of Sam and Diane. Similarly, I look at *The Cosby Show* and *Family Ties* as influences on how the family dynamics are represented in my script. These are the types of shows I looked to as templates for my script, when it still existed as a half-hour comedy, at least in terms of character relationships and dialogue, if not in tone and structure.

As you have surely noticed, *The Forest For The Trees* is not a multi-camera sitcom. The choice to develop the script as a single-camera show was made very early in the process, and reinforced throughout its development. Most obviously, the tone I intended to convey does not lend itself well to this format. To dial back the dark humor and general crassness of the real environment on which the show is based would feel disingenuous at best. This was never going to be an advertiser-friendly, network-type show, regardless of the logistical difficulties inherent in filming it in front of a live studio audience. The more difficult choice was whether to situate the story within the confines of the half-hour, single-camera comedy format or to expand it into an hour-long comedy/drama. Initially, the material veered strongly toward the absurd, befitting of my own impressions of working and living in this environment. That, in combination with the influence of the comedies listed above, led to the decision, at this point, to employ the single-camera sitcom format in my second real attempt at writing this story.

My early attempts to break the plot led to concerns about this choice, as once again I had more to content in mind than thirty-odd pages would hold. The first problem was that I felt there

was a certain amount of exposition necessary in orienting the audience to this world, given its uniqueness and relative obscurity. If I attempted to write a show about cops or lawyers or doctors, presumably I would not have encountered this problem to the same degree, as these jobs are much more familiar to a given audience, even if merely from exposure to those worlds on television and film. In the relatively small sample survey of everyone I have ever talked to about this show, not one person who has never treeplanted has ever heard of it, either. A major challenge has been (and continues to be) finding a balance in how much time and space to spend detailing the minutiae of this world versus the more universal realities that exist therein. In other words, I am faced with a difficult choice in how much time to spend explaining the world before we let the characters start to live within it. Another concern was simply that as I began to outline the story, there was more of a serious, dramatic plot developing than a thirty-minute sitcom should hold. I wrestled with these problems throughout the writing process of this iteration; the end result was a forty-five page script that was neither simple nor funny enough to be a comedy, but not long or dramatic enough to warrant a full hour. The general consensus from the workshop process for this script was that the world was unique, vibrant and interesting, and that some of my characters and relationships exhibited those qualities as well, but that overall there were some questions about the tone and the stakes of the story. Though the context was found to be compelling to some, there was nothing in the story itself that felt like a strong reason to tune in every week.

The end result of my second attempt at writing a pilot set in the treeplanting world was an improvement upon the first, but still an ultimately disappointing effort. The process of getting to that disappointment, however, was illuminating. The need for a definitive choice to be made as to the format for the script at the outset became very clear. Happily, the right choice (at least in

the writer's eyes) revealed itself through this process: the next attempt at the show was going to be in the hour-long format, and the tone would be comedy/drama. Secondly, the stakes needed to be raised, and the story needed a better hook, something to draw in readers and viewers that had less to do with the world than it had to do with characters and relationships – something bigger, and more universal. There were certainly elements of this second attempt that could be transposed and applied to the next installation, but on the scale of revisions, this was going to require a wholesale rewrite.

CHAPTER THREE: A BRAND NEW BAG

Skipping ahead a year, to my final semester of graduate school, I decided it was time for a new approach. This world clearly has a hold on me; I firmly believe that it will be dramatized on television or in film in the very near future, and I would be very upset not to be the one to do so. I believe that a television series is the format that best services the story I want to tell, and television is the medium in which I most want to work, with or without this particular script. However, there are certain realities that came into focus in the waning days of my graduate education; specifically, the innumerable obstacles that stand in the way of success in such a competitive field. The prospects of moving on from school and into the professional world – or the lack of prospects, perhaps – led me to the notion of trying to tell the story of my treeplanting experiences as a feature film. My theory was that if I could not break into the business through the traditional writer's avenues, which did not seem likely at the time (nor does it now), the best approach might be to go back to work for a year or two, work on a feature script, then fund and produce it myself as an independent film. The hope was that amid certain financial circumstances, and with middle age approaching a little too fast for my liking, this might be a way to circumvent the system, and quickly make a name for myself. This thought process did not hold, ultimately, but it did lead me to develop a feature-length script set in the treeplanting world during my final semester.

Many of the students in the workshop had been privy to my television script a year earlier, and so were familiar with the general idea of treeplanting and what I hoped to do in telling my story of that world. However, I decided that the best approach would be to keep only the broadest sense of my previous plot intact, and to devise an entirely new tale. This choice was made for a few different reasons: an aversion to redundancy, for one; a need to challenge myself

in further developing my craft, for another. The determining factors, however, were the demands of the medium itself. My television plot could not simply be expanded and layered to become a feature-length screenplay. The pilots were always set during the first week of the treeplanting season, which runs in total for about three months. As such, there was an implied suggestion that the entire season of the theoretical show would roughly correspond with the length of a treeplanting season. Any film version, by contrast, begged for the entire planting season to be contained within its 120 pages (again, at least that's what seemed clear to the writer). The model that came to mind was *Fast Times at Ridgemont High*, which traverses an entire school year in under two hours, and manages to incorporate and wrap up multiple character arcs therein. This seemed a logical paradigm on which to model my story; however, as mentioned earlier, it also meant that the plots of my earlier television scripts were not going to be much help.

While breaking the new outline for the feature script, I encountered some similar concerns that had arisen in the previous year's workshop. The world was still unique and interesting, but the stakes were not high enough to really impact the audience. It was with this in mind that I set about trying to create universal plot threads and arcs for the five most prominent characters in my ensemble. The ensemble itself posed more of a challenge in the feature script than it did in television; perhaps this is another reason why the story is ultimately a better fit for the latter medium. Regardless, my intention was to create arcs that were universal, and to set them against the backdrop of this very obscure world. It was a worthwhile endeavor in theory; unfortunately, in this case, the execution was substandard. The pendulum swung too far, and my story became too universal, thereby negating the uniqueness of the environment. The story outline I produced could have existed in any world, effectively rendered the setting moot. Through this failure, I believe a major gap in my process was bridged. I had always had

difficulty in finding the balance in the story, how much to focus on the world of treeplanting itself and how much to worry about being too specific about that world, thereby alienating my audience. The major takeaway from the process of trying to write this story as a feature was at least a rough understanding of where that balance lies.

In writing scenes for any of these earlier scripts, my focus would be on the details of the treeplanting job and environment. I spent a lot of time and energy explaining to the audience what this world looked like, what the job itself entailed, how the camp was set up, how to plant a tree, and other similarly tedious elements. These descriptions, while important to me, were never particularly entertaining to a larger audience. The trick, then, was to find those details unique to this world that were informative or illuminating, but that also elicited an emotional response, be it amusement, disgust, or anything in between. The response that solidified this notion in my head was to a moment in the feature script wherein a few of the main ensemble take turns “sky-dumping,” which, with due apologies for what you are about to read, involves climbing as high as you can up a tree in order to defecate. I have no idea if this practice is limited to treeplanters, though I have my suspicions. I only know that it was in this environment that I experienced the phenomenon, and that the audience responded strongly to its depiction in my script, because they believed it to exist only in this context. This response, strangely enough, was the culmination of the ideas I had been working toward in the script and in previous versions, of trying to find a way to make this world as interesting and entertaining to the reader as it has always been to me. I would imagine this struggle is common among any writer who chooses to explore a subject that he or she knows much more intimately than does their audience. In my attempt to tell a story about this world as a feature screenplay, I felt that I developed an important tool in lessening that struggle.

CHAPTER FOUR: CUTS LIKE A KNIFE

The real-world considerations that led me to pursue the feature version of a treeplanting story were put on hold (at least for the time being) by an internship in Austin that resulted in a summer job in Los Angeles. I had been working for a writer named Rob Thomas, who had created and run shows such as *Veronica Mars*, *Cupid*, and *Party Down*. The nature of the internship was to act as a de facto sounding board as Rob developed pitches, broke outlines and wrote scripts for a handful of pilots he had sold. There were many positive outcomes from this experience for me. First, it solidified my desire to work in television. Second, and of more immediate importance, it led to a job working on the *Veronica Mars* movie, which came into being during the course of the internship. I could not have hoped for a better opportunity; however, this also meant I would not be returning to British Columbia to supervise a treeplanting camp. For the first time in fifteen years, I would not be spending my summer in the bush.

There has been certain amount of sadness in this transition for me, as I clearly have a great amount of affection for that life and the people that come with it. The saving grace lay in the fact that I would be living in this world again insofar as I could disappear into my memories and imagination while writing my thesis script. The proper format was clear based on the trial-and-error detailed previously, and I now felt I had a greater sense of how to find balance in the content. And thanks to an off-handed comment by Scott Shepherd, another professional writer and guest lecturer, I felt I had some more solid idea of how to approach the plot. Scott ran a television class with my Thesis Advisor, Cindy McCreery during my final semester of graduate school, and met with each student individually at the outset in order to get a feel for their personalities and their writing goals. When he asked me about my background and the scripts I had written, the treeplanting work and my pilot came up. I briefly told him the general idea, and

his response was that it sounded like *Six Feet Under* – in the woods. We did not really discuss it in further depth, and to this day I have no idea what exactly he meant by that, but somehow it planted a seed in my head. The notion to which I kept returning, as I tried to figure out his meaning (instead of simply asking, which would have been much too easy), was that the company that runs the treeplanting camp in the story should be a family business. The idea seemed a perfect fit. The inherent tension immediately raised the stakes, and I started to think about shows like *Sons of Anarchy* and *Downton Abbey* as potential influences. Although on the surface the shows are not terribly similar to one another, what I believe they have in common, and what I wanted my script to have as well, is a duality of family. Both shows portray a literal family, bonded by birth and marriage, and a figurative family, bonded by shared experience. Incorporating the family business element to my story should result in a similarly duality, and hopefully add some measure of dramatic effect.

While this idea had me excited in the abstract, there was still the matter of how to translate it into a specific plot outline. Outlines were always something with which I struggled, as I almost always became inspired to write based on openings. Opening scenes, opening acts, opening credits... whatever the spark, it never extended into the back half of a script, and still rarely does. Therein lay my main difficulty with breaking plot: I would be so excited about writing the first pages that I would prefer to jump right in at the expense of developing the shape of the story as a whole. My first attempts at writing this story certainly suffer from this malady, as most start strong (relatively speaking), then lose steam and focus, falling apart before the finish line. The very first attempt at writing a draft, years back, was never outlined at all, leaving a dozen threads dangling and mostly untied in the end. Subsequent drafts improved upon this aspect, but never enough to result in a wholly workable script. The more I encountered this issue

throughout graduate school, the more determined I became to embrace the outline, to develop my story in this form until I was absolutely satisfied, and only then to start writing actual script pages. It is, evidently, still a process about which I have a few things to learn.

At the outset of breaking the story for *The Forest For The Trees*, I flirted with a few vague family-centric ideas: taking a classic plot, maybe of Shakespearean origin, and transposing it to my world (another nod to *Sons of Anarchy*, which did exactly that with *Hamlet*); or having the married co-owners of the company going through a bitter divorce, with their children and the company pull apart in a destructive tug-of-war between them. What I finally settled on for this draft was the idea of an estranged father-son dynamic, wherein the father owns a planting company and has raised his son in this environment. The son is now grown and bitter, the relationship with his father in a state of disrepair. This is essentially a different take on the Gus-Mooney dynamic that exists in *The Forest For The Trees* (at this point, they were named Rollie and Tug, respectively). In this early outline, the father and son are estranged, the son having vowed to never work for his father again.

The plot of this version revolved around a new forester, Elaine, who was forcing Gus' hand in expanding his volume of work, thus motivating the Mooney character's return to the family business, to run an additional crew. Sara was still a green rookie, but she was treeplanting of her own volition, and desperately wanted to succeed. She was not acclimating well to her new environment. Mooney's initial intent was simply to sabotage the contract until it went up in flames, and then to walk away forever from the treeplanting world. Through the course of his escalating series of attempts, Sara manages to endear herself to Mooney in her clumsy, concerted efforts to improve as a planter. He eventually decides against the sabotage in favor of a plan to

take over the contract himself and start his own company, all while navigating a burgeoning romance with Ali.

The result was a protagonist in Mooney that was only partially likeable, at best, and at worst downright abhorrent. Although I do believe this can be an effective way to position your lead in the current television landscape, given the success of shows like *Breaking Bad*, it never really felt right for the story I wanted to tell. His redeeming moments came from his interactions with the members of his crew, especially with Sara, who was so awkwardly and adorably uninitiated in the ways of the trade. Mooney had a soft spot for her, and it was implied that through this sibling-like relationship, he might learn to forgive his father as well. Characters called “Ali” and “Bates” existed in this outline, as well as the rest of the supporting cast, in slightly altered form. None of them, however, carried much weight at this stage.

This version did not make it past the outline. The biggest problem, as pointed out by my Thesis Advisor, was there was nothing for the audience to really care about. Mooney was a jerk, but not entirely unsympathetic, and his attitude toward Gus could be considered justified from a certain perspective. Mooney’s goal, on the other hand, was not pleasant, and was not something for which an audience could root. Every other character would have suffered in some way as a result of Mooney’s initial plan if it had succeeded; furthermore, his new intention to steal the contract from his father would have only serviced his own needs, and benefited no one else. The audience would be more likely to hope for Mooney to fail, assuming they became invested in the slightest in any of the secondary characters. Perhaps more importantly, nothing was really at stake, at least not for our protagonist. If Mooney was able to successfully sabotage the contract, he would be left with no job, no friends, no relationship with his father, and only a misguided sense of revenge to justify the lengths to which he went. Gus had more to lose than Mooney, as

he was actually hoping to reconcile with his son; similarly, for Sara, to be successful as a treeplanter was of utmost importance. Even the supporting characters would out of a job if Mooney wrecked their contract. In a sense, the stakes were higher for every character in the story than they were for my protagonist.

My intent was to build an arc for Mooney, whereby he started as a nearly irredeemable (but somehow still watchable) jerk, and evolved to a place where his priorities were in better order. Generally speaking, I tend to prefer anti-heroes as my protagonists. In my writing, my central characters are usually less than polite, extremely flawed, and self-serving. The influence of the television series and films of my youth are to blame for this, as discussed previously. Sam Malone, from *Cheers* was a former alcoholic and serial womanizer (who did not hesitate to slap Diane in the face after she did so to him first); Reggie Hammond in *48 Hours* was a convict and a pathological liar; Paul Newman in *The Color of Money* was a hustler and an opportunist. These characters are indicative of my favorites, and consciously or not, they are the types I tend to try and emulate in my own work. The problem, at times, as in the case of this outline, is that I have a habit of going too far in this depiction at the early stages of the story. Essentially, the protagonist becomes too irredeemable, and the rest of their arc is rendered moot by virtue of the audience's immediate and irreversible dislike for them. Mooney was painted very broadly at this point, but the overall impression was that even if he became the most charming, affable character in my execution of his dialogue, the content of his actions and intent were too morally questionable and too ultimately unimportant to warrant any real audience connection.

Another issue with the first outline was that while the world was once again unique and interesting in and of itself, there was no real access point for the audience. Most of the story was seen through Mooney's eyes, and this world was already so well known to him that he was dying

to get out of it. Sara and the other planters on Mooney's crew (who in this version were all rookies as well, with the exception of Coach) were a potential window through which to view this world, as they knew almost as little as the audience about the nature of a treeplanting camp. Unfortunately, as they were viewed mainly from Mooney's perspective, their lack of knowledge served more as another annoyance he had to deal with, rather than a proxy for the viewer. This was compelling evidence that what was missing from this outline was a protagonist with which the audience could truly connect and relate.

This was a disappointing outcome for me. The workshop process of graduate school had always had ebbs and flows of praise and criticism, but what it provided above all else was a constant stream of feedback. I could tell myself that a given workshop was a merely a small sample size, that the opinions of peers and professors were just a few of many, that creative material is subjective; however, that would not necessarily diminish the impact of the feedback loop. This first outline represented the longest uninterrupted period of criticism-free screenwriting work I had done since I was manually adjusting margins on Microsoft Word on my first version of this pilot. I had worked hard to get the outline to a place where I was satisfied, and ready to go to pages. The feedback I received was a bit of a blow to my writer's ego, in this sense, but it forced me to take a step back, to try and look at my work objectively. In my final analysis, the issues that were brought to light, about a lack of stakes and audience connection, were completely valid. I had done the leg-work of plotting, but I had not seen the bigger picture. In some ways, I had transferable material with which to work, yet in the larger sense, I was back to square one, because I had failed to see the forest for the trees. One silver lining: I now had a new title.

CHAPTER FIVE: TOO MANY FISH IN THE SEA

My story, then, was begging for a more sympathetic protagonist, through which the audience could access this unique, obscure world. It was suggested by my Thesis Advisor that I explore the script from the angle of a fish out of water. It made perfect sense: with such a strange and foreign context as my setting, what better way to engage the audience than by giving them the same perspective as the protagonist with regard to the new environment to which they were both being introduced? While I agreed with that sentiment in principle, I just could not see Mooney as that character. Perhaps this is a failing of me as a writer (one of only two or three total), but from the very first attempt at writing this story, Mooney and his predecessors had always been a slightly bitter man in his early thirties that was good at his job but very, very tired of doing it. In essence, there had always been a character based on me, and where I was by this point in my forestry career.

Throughout the past few years, as I continued to try and develop this story into a feasible script, I was simultaneously searching for a story in other writing projects that would allow me to create a female protagonist. I have no particular insight (that I am aware of) into the female mind; nor do I tend to gravitate historically to films or television shows with female leads. However, for some reason, the idea of writing for a female lead is appealing to me. In *As Good As It Gets*, the reclusive writer, played by Jack Nicholson, is asked by a gushing female fan how he writes women so well; his response is “I think of a man, then take away reason, and accountability.” This is not my process – at least not the second half of the line. What intrigues me about writing for a woman is the notion of not making any attempt to think as a female, but instead to treat the female characters as I do my male characters, and simply write them in my

own voice, adjusted of course to the context in which they exist. The result of which, at least in theory, is a character that becomes richer simply by virtue of how the audience reads this character with their own preconceptions of gender. In terms of making characters feel fresh, different, and interesting, the hope is that the audience will be doing some of the heavy lifting for me. This is an oversimplification, certainly, of my approach to any character, but my dialogue-writing process does involve imagining myself in the character's shoes, regardless of whether they are man, woman or child. Understand that I am certainly not saying this theory is scientifically sound, only that it informs my desire to write for female lead characters.

I cannot tell you why it took so long to realize that *The Forest For The Trees* was so well suited to a female protagonist, but the idea finally did strike, it just seemed to fit. Sara already was the fish out of water, in every existing outline or script. I wanted the piece to have an ensemble feel overall, but if I could shift Gus and Mooney's plots to the background to some degree, Sara's arc could be the most prominent, the one that carried the story. The one problem with this approach, at least in my mind, is that to this point Sara had always been some version of an awkward, clumsy naïf. I was not sure that was a strong enough characterization to shoulder the burden of a lead character, even if I could figure out a way to sustain that type of personality and make her interesting for sixty or seventy pages. The new challenge became how to make Sara fun to write and engaging, but still maintain her status as the new kid on the block. I started to think of all the common characteristics of treeplanters I know, and especially of Mooney and Gus as I now pictured them. The first place my mind went for Sara was that she should be a city kid, born and raised, and that she should come from money, and therefore never have had to work a day in her young life. This is usually a hiccup for me in general, as I do not tend to regard the overprivileged among us with the kind of sympathy I wanted the audience to have for Sara.

Despite my reservations, I kept this notion in place because it was just so inherently oppositional to every other character she was going to meet. I determined that I wanted her to be well educated, but not just through the advantages of her schooling; I wanted her to have a keen and inquisitive mind. I wanted her to be tough, both superficially and at a deeper level, and I wanted her to be a little bit mean. I hoped she would be a more sympathetic anti-hero than the one I had attempted with Mooney's character, but an anti-hero nonetheless. Therefore, perhaps most importantly, I wanted her to be funny – darkly funny – so that the audience would appreciate and enjoy her demeanor even if they were opposed to some of her behavior.

I was starting to feel confident that I was on the right track, finally, with my protagonist. I saw her as a solution to the issue of accessibility of the world of treeplanting, and she allowed me to reposition Mooney and Gus as less adversarial, to strip down their stories. The remaining issue – just a minor one – was I still had no idea how to configure the plot, now that an entirely different character would be the one driving it.

CHAPTER SIX: PLEASE ALLOW ME TO RE-INTRODUCE MYSELF

Despite feeling like a massive hurdle had been cleared, there were still several questions and concerns facing me in the new outline. Chief among them was how to define my major characters given the shift in focus. The Mooney and Gus characters were now taking something of a backseat to Sara; as a result, all three would need to be redefined, both individually and in relation to one another.

In previous drafts, Sara had always been some version of an the odd woman out, by virtue of the fact that she was new to the treeplanting world, and not very successful at integrating herself into it. She had been a wide-eyed, naïve flower child, a vapid, superficial urbanite, and a sympathetic klutz. Given the fact that her characterization kept changing, I suppose I was never really satisfied with any of them, but I was never overly concerned either, since she was secondary at most. Now that she was to become my protagonist and the window into this world, she needed specific and appropriate definition. The anchor to the criteria used to make this choice was that she had to be as much of a fish out of water as possible. On a related, almost equally important note, I knew now that I wanted her to be similar in spirit, deep down, to Mooney and Gus, but to be their polar opposite on the surface. Sara would have grown up in the city, never camped or spent any time in the wilderness growing up. She would have to be trendy, sophisticated, well educated, and at something of a princess. I felt she should have come from a wealthy, privileged background. The flip side of that coin was that she would also have to be fun to write. What this meant to me, and almost always does, is a heavy dose of sarcasm. The picture of Sara was coming into further focus. She was very smart, and very defensive, both of which could manifest through her sarcasm. I pictured her as having grown up too fast, but not quite as fast as she thinks. I wanted her to be consciously aloof by all appearances, but deeply caring

underneath the façade. More simply put, I wanted her to have a tough outer shell that protected her soft, gooey heart (the influence of *Veronica Mars* is worth noting again at this stage). Sara's arc, at least in the pilot, would be the partial melting of her icy exterior. Though there were specific plot points to be determined that would require further specification of Sara's character, I was relatively happy with the broad strokes.

Mooney and Gus had characteristics that were already in place to a certain degree. I knew that since they both came from the treeplanting world, they would be ideologically free of the confines and obligations of the nine-to-five crowd. They were always meant to be somewhat crass and uncivilized, but savvy and tough in a way that people who live a rural, hands-on, do-it-yourself existence tend to be. The major change in this version of the script that would affect their characters was that the conflict between them was no longer central, and therefore its intensity needed to diminish. Parent-child dynamics have always been central to my writing, a fact I only became consciously aware of toward the end of my graduate education. What intrigues me about these relationships – and father-son dynamics in particular – is the complexity and range of emotions involved. I wanted to dial down the conflict, but without losing the underlying issues in their relationship. I felt that fundamental disagreements between them were important to include, but not at the expense of overshadowing Sara's story. Therefore, instead of the longstanding estrangement of earlier drafts, I chose to draw Mooney and Gus as perennially at odds, but with a grudging appreciation and mutual respect toward one another. I always pictured Mooney as stunted in his maturity; in the new version of their relationship, Gus became a barometer of his son's attitude and behavior, whereby he could let Mooney (and the audience) know when he had crossed a line. In general, the new plot outline allowed both Mooney's and Gus' character flaws to be more superficial and forgivable than the earlier version, in which

Mooney schemed to take over his father's company behind his back, and in which the Gus character's fate was somewhat deserved. Part of the intention of the new triangular web of familial relationships was to render each character more likeable, without sacrificing completely the moral ambiguity that I had found so interesting in the first place.

The remaining characters – Digger and Dutch, Lizzie, Clarke, Coach, Moss, Ali and Bates – have all existed in some form or another in earlier drafts, most of them going all the way back to those first clumsy attempts at writing this pilot. Their collective inspiration was drawn from my own experiences (along with their names), as each is an amalgamation of character traits and voices of people with whom I have crossed paths over my years in the forest industry. There have certainly been adjustments and alterations in each new version of the story, but the overall intent was to create another sort of family unit. I wanted them to have diverse personalities, but to have their strongest traits be the common bonds they form in suffering through the experience of treeplanting together. The choice to have a literal family at the center of the story should provide a thematic parallel to the figurative family that is created among the crew. My hope was to draw them each vividly enough in the short script space allotted that one could easily imagine a spin-off series centering on any supporting character. What I found difficult in this balance was resisting the temptation to give these characters too much screen time, as they were often more fun to write and easier to give voice to than my core characters. From my limited experience, this is both a common problem and a good problem to have, but one that requires diligence in monitoring, especially with regard to maintenance of tone. My supporting cast always brings in a heavier dose of comic relief, and my concerns in determining how much to use these secondary characters were that they might shift the story away from the dramatic, toward the comedic. In an effort to raise the stakes of the show as a whole, I had

created some fairly dark plot points, and I worried about undercutting the effect of these moments by veering into the silly, or the absurd. I found this a tough balance to find, because my experiences in this world include heavy helpings of all of the above. I think the larger lesson gained through this process was in staying true to the story, rather than the events that inspired it; a lesson that could be applied back to my core characters and my major storylines as well.

CHAPTER SEVEN: ONE MORE CHANCE

While I did not yet have the movements of this new outline worked out, I did feel strongly that the central conflict had to come from Sara's story, and it had to come from her relationships with Mooney and Gus. The three characters would form the core ensemble of the show, their stories closely intertwined, with Sara as the lead. My half-joking pitch for the show, in any iteration, has always been that it is *Greek* meets *Deadwood*, two vastly different shows that at least have in common their ability to interweave plot lines among multiple characters. With Sara being completely foreign to the treeplanting world, and Gus and Mooney being so immersed therein, the next challenge would be coming up with a way to logically bring their stories together. At the same time, I was still wrestling with how to transcend Sara's upbringing and make her somewhat sympathetic. Somehow it dawned on me that she could be Gus' daughter, and Mooney's half-sister, a fact only revealed to any of them upon Sara's mother's tragic death. My only concern was that it felt a bit coincidental, like a plot machination from a soap opera, but ultimately I was okay with that, because it felt like an organic way to keep them at least superficially at odds, but to also give them some connective tissue.

The next challenge lay in determining Sara's goal. Determining a protagonist's goal, deciding what they want and also what they need, has been a defining process throughout my graduate education. This is another task with which I have struggled in my writing, in part because I do not fully subscribe to the idea that a script must contain a clear and defined goal in order to be effective, but also because I do not excel at creating specific wants and needs for my characters. I usually see attitudes and personalities much more clearly at the outset, and often end up spending too much time and focus on developing those elements at the expense of goals. In this case, however, Sara had to want something in order to move her story forward, otherwise

she would merely be reactive, and would have no agency. The Sara I pictured, while certainly in a strange place emotionally, was not the type to let others dictate the courses of her action. I tried to envision what her reaction would be to finding out about her father and getting introduced to him for the first time in this environment. As her character became clearer in my imagination, only one response felt organic: she would hate it. And she would want to get out of there at the first opportunity.

Devising the various details by which this could all happen took some further trial and error, with many choices dictated simply by my own idea of what would be logical in a given situation. It struck me that if Sara's mother had died, and she and Gus had never heard of one another, she would probably be living with her grandparents. Subsequently, for Mr. and Mrs. Ross to then seek Gus out and drop this bombshell on him and Sara, they would have to be at the end of their rope with her. Sara's arc would involve having no intention of going through with this new family experiment, but would gradually coming to change her mind and wanting to stay. She would either consciously or subconsciously realize that this might be the best place for her to heal. Once this basic story spine was established, the sub-plots were layered in, many borrowed from earlier outlines or drafts. Mooney would learn that instead of taking over the company, he would now have competition as Gus merged with another outfit; Gus would be going through chemotherapy and concerned about the legacy he was leaving behind; Mooney would take awhile to warm up to Sara. The core triangle and their interrelationships were beginning to feel solid.

Fleshing out the story beats was the next step. The introductory act had to establish Sara's backstory, as well as the existence of Mooney, Gus, and treeplanting itself. I knew I wanted to go out of this act on the revelation that Sara is Gus' daughter. I wrestled with how much this big

reveal was telegraphed and obvious, but in the end I determined that it still worked as a character moment, even if the audience knew it was coming. This was not a show that was going to be predicated on cliffhangers at every break. The second act would explain the backstory of Gus and Sara's mother, then establish Sara on her first day in this new world. Mooney would make a bet with Bates, the other foreman, as to which crew would plant more trees throughout the week. It would end on Sara sleeping in and missing her first workday. Act Three would show the crew planting – with Sara this time – and would end as Mooney catches her stealing money from Gus, and insulting them both as she talked with a friend on the camp's satellite phone. The fourth act would see Sara and Mooney stuck together fixing a flat tire after work, and mark a turnaround in their relationship. They would return home to find Gus waiting to fire Sara. Act Five would begin with Gus explaining his rationale for the surprise decision, and Mooney, in a reversal of roles, advocating on Sara's behalf. A deal would be made, whereby if Sara reaches the impossible goal of planting a thousand trees the next day, she will be allowed to stay. Mooney's crew would work to win his bet with Bates while Sara would bust her butt to stick around, but both efforts ultimately would fall short. Mooney would lie to Gus about Sara's planting total, and she would not be fired after all. The outline was in place; I was ready to go to pages.

The writing of this version of the script proved to be a bit of a unique experience for me, in that I had a fully developed outline to follow the entire way through. There were certainly gaps to be filled and choices to be made, but I had both existing material and my own memories from which to draw. I was generally pleased with my progression, and the work I had done in the outline stage led to an increase in efficiency and production. The pages were flowing relatively well. The personalities and idiosyncrasies of the characters became clearer the more I wrote, and

their voices felt more clear and consistent. The first draft was a decent approximation of my original intent, and I felt generally good about the entire process as I typed “End of Episode.”

When I reread the draft, I was not as pleased. The most obvious issue was that it ran 80 pages – at least ten pages too long. I felt some measure of confidence that I could trim and tweak to get it to a more appropriate length, but my primary concern was the final two acts. The change in Sara’s attitude did not seem entirely justified, and therefore her subsequent actions did not feel motivated. There were a few other threads that I had left dangling, a few scenes that I felt needed work, but Sara’s choices and the reasons for them in the final two acts were not working for me. I was going to have to take a mulligan.

CHAPTER EIGHT: THE RISING

Another issue that had bothered me throughout the writing of the initial draft was that I had never found a way to weave in the revelation of Gus' cancer until the final moments of the episode. I wanted it to have more resonance, rather than seem like a big lead-in for the rest of a series, which does not yet exist. In the search for a solution to this problem, I stumbled upon a fix for my bigger concern. If Sara could find out earlier that Gus was dying, maybe this would shake her enough to motivate a change in her behavior. She had already lost one parent, and in the first few acts, she was not too interested in a relationship with another one, or her half-brother. She is in a very strange and fragile place emotionally throughout the story, and has developed a tough exterior as a defense mechanism. I felt that she needed something monumental to happen in order to have that mechanism break down, even a little. Realizing that her father, whom she has just met and takes completely for granted, is potentially going to be gone forever as well just might be enough to do the trick. Furthermore, this change added tremendous value in the context of my overall intent to weave the storylines of my three main characters together. Again, it felt like a bit of a melodramatic plot point, but solved too many other problems that I chose to overlook that particular concern.

My new outline reordered some of the beats in the final two acts, and rendered some scenes completely obsolete. The writing of replacement scenes certainly took some time and effort, but I was encouraged by how much more organic they felt than the scenes they were replacing. Other slight additions and changes were inspired through this process, and a few threads that had been left dangling even became plants that paid off. For instance, Sara's lighter could now carry symbolic weight; Dutch and Digger's constant advances toward her now served a slightly greater purpose. The additions of new scenes certainly made trimming pages a

daunting task, but the greater clarity of purpose made difficult choices a little easier to make. The first act especially, which had run 23 pages, was streamlined and cut down to 16 pages. The remaining acts were edited throughout with economy of words as a guiding principle. The end result was a vastly improved, tighter story, 68 pages total and much more unified and coherent. The process has been long and taxing, but I am finally happy with the story I have told from this world that has been such an important part of my life. Having said that, I still am keenly aware that I have a long way to go before this script is really what I want it to be.

CHAPTER TEN: THE LONG AND WINDING ROAD

Upon finishing this draft, I enjoyed a nice moment of self-satisfaction. It lasted about thirty seconds. Almost immediately, I began worrying about plot points, movements, choices, motivations, characterizations, tone, and just about everything else. While I do take some pride in the accomplishment of completing this version of the script, I know there is work to be done yet.

I have never really given myself the opportunity to do multiple passes on a script. I really enjoy the revision process, ego crushing though it may be. However, I have only truly done first revisions, where the broad strokes of the story are the focus. I would love to do multiple passes on this script, to look at the story in its entirety to be sure, but also to look at it from each character's perspective as well. I would love to do a pass that addresses the balance I have wrestled with so often, so that I ensure the world is accessible but that I also play up the uniqueness and absurdity of this environment. I would love to make the whole script sexier, but not in the sense of adding (much) nudity, as that would not be organic to the story. Rather, I would like to look at every opportunity to layer a moment with further levels of interest, to have every moment mined for its full potential drama, or simply for further attention to detail.

The process itself has been extremely instructional. Creating two outlines and two full drafts outside the workshop environment has been a valuable training exercise that I will hopefully be able to apply in the near future in a professional context. It has certainly instilled in me the desire to continue in pursuit of the craft, to continue developing and learning and, most importantly, writing.

Appendix A: Original Recipe

March 2010

Teaser – Introduce Tug and Cara.

Act One – Introduce Erin, Mooney, Jill, Moss, Robert, Jean.

A- story conflict: Tug is persona non grata – Erin insists that he be fired.

B- story conflict: Erin is in danger of losing one of her foremen, Jean.

Act Two – Introduce Mooney's crew.

A- story conflict: Erin threatens to bring the whole job down by telling the client about everything they do on the sly

B- story conflict: Jean has become apathetic and useless

Act Three – resolve conflicts together: Erin allows Tug to stay after he talks to Jean and gets her on board. Tug finds out that Cara is Erin's sister.

Tag – Bates is revealed to be the replacement crewboss.

Beats:

Teaser:

1. Ext. cutblock - day. Tug has bear encounter – revealed to be a dream.
2. Ext. camp – first snow day. Tug meets Cara.

Act One:

3. Ext. camp – same day. Mooney tells Erin that Tug is on his crew. Tug meets Jill. Erin loses her shit.
4. Ext. camp – same night. Mooney and Tug sit at their campfire, discussing Tug's chances of sticking around. Mooney's not sure Robert will honor their deal. Tug's not sure it's worth it, except for Cara. He helps Jill with her tent.

Act Two:

5. Ext. camp – snow day two. Erin looks for Mooney at his tent. Sees Tug too and threatens him. Jean arrives and reveals her situation to Erin.
6. Ext. camp – day. Tug and Jill chop wood together. Cara and Tug more officially meet.
7. Int. office bus – morning of snow day three. Robert shows up at camp and gets an earful from Erin about Tug and Mooney.
8. Jean and Moss scene. Not sure what but should exposit Jean's relationship with Tug and a bit about Tug and Mooney's situation.
9. Ext. campfire – night. Robert speaks with Tug and Mooney; strikes a deal with Tug that might allow him to stay. Jean arrives at the campfire and Tug goes to work.
10. Int. cook shack – morning – Erin lets Tug know the deal at early breakfast – she's sick of being put behind the eight ball by Robert, and intends to start using her leverage. She can live without him better than he can live without her. She is going to use Tug as a beta test and he should be packing his shit by later that evening. Jean shows up, ready to roll, with a whole new attitude and outlook.

Act Three:

1. Ext. cut-block – day. Planting pre-work. Tug is training Mooney's rookies, especially Jill. Cara comes over, followed by Erin. 'Are you kidding me?' scene. It starts snowing on them before they can plant.
2. Ext. cut-block – day. Erin tells Mooney to let Tug know that he's got a reprieve and can stick around.
3. Ext. campfire – night. It's still snowing, so there will not be any planting tomorrow. Mooney's crew is getting shitfaced. Erin and Tug have a civil, drunken moment. 'I'm gonna bang your sister'.

Tag:

Bates shows up?

Appendix B: Early Pilot – Original - Teaser and Act One

August 2010

Hurry Up and Wait

Written by

Bob Dearden

(PILOT)

March 11, 2010

FADE IN:

EXT. CLEAR CUT FOREST - DAY.

The sun blazes overhead in a cloudless sky.

COWBOY (late 20s), a lanky, grizzled young man in a ten-gallon white hat, plants trees near the edge of the clearing. He is tired, dirty and sweating, and sings aloud to his iPod.

COWBOY

Lookin' out on the morning rain
(Ah-ooo)
I used to feel so uninspired
(Ah-ooo)
And when I knew I had to face
another day
(Ah-ooo)
Lord it made me feel so tired
Before the day I met you
Life was so unkind
But you're the key to my peace of
mind

'cause you make me feel
You make me feel
You make me feel like a natural
woman (woman)

He is startled to see a large
GRIZZLY BEAR emerging slowly on
all fours from the forest edge.

COWBOY

Whoa bear!!!

As Grizzly Bear advances, Cowboy reverts to his bear safety training. He slowly begins to back away, raising his hands and shovel above his head.

Grizzly Bear stops and tilts his head curiously at Cowboy for a moment. He picks up a nearby stick, stands on his hind legs, and mimics Cowboy's pose.

GRIZZLY BEAR

What the fuck is that supposed to do?

COWBOY
(confused pause)
Deter you from challenging me?

GRIZZLY BEAR
That's retarded. Hey, do you have any smokes?

EXT.BUS STATION - DAY.

Cowboy, lying on his DUFFLE BAG in the parking lot, taking a nap, is woken up from his daydream by a blaring truck horn.

A large group of TREEPLANTERS mill about aimlessly around him, their respective backpacks and gear lying in unorganized piles.

CARA (mid 20s), a girl-next door who radiates effortless beauty and sex appeal, approaches. She looks around for a moment, then down at Cowboy. She kicks him gently in the leg. The sun shines behind her as he squints to make out the source of his disturbance.

CARA
Hey. What's with you?

COWBOY
I'm not sure how to answer that.

CARA
Am I in the right spot for Mason's camp?

COWBOY
You surely are.

CARA
Do you know where he is?

COWBOY
I surely do not.

CARA

Okay. Thanks.

Cara walks off, and Cowboy watches her go. He smirks, presses play on his iPod, and pulls his hat back down over his eyes.

COWBOY

(singing along)

Now I'm no longer doubtful
Of what I'm livin' for
And if I make you happy
I don't need to do more

'cause you make me feel
You make me feel
You make me feel like a natural
woman (woman)

ACT ONE

EXT.BUS STATION - DAY.

Passengers disembark a recently-arrived bus amongst the already assembled rabble.

JILL HENRY (early 20s), a slight, mousy young woman with dreadlocks, wearing a poorly assembled approximation of a hippie uniform, is struggling to manage all of her luggage.

Cowboy stands nearby, smoking a cigarette. He watches, amused, and finally butts out his smoke and ventures over to help.

COWBOY

Howdy.

JILL

What? Oh. Hi - Hello. Hi. I'm okay. Well not really, but thank you.

COWBOY

I didn't ask.

JILL

Oh. I know, I just - I don't know.

COWBOY

Put those down.

JILL

What? No, I'm -

COWBOY

I know. Put 'em down.

Jill obliges. She drops about ten different pieces of equipment that she was trying to carry in her skinny arms.

Cowboy goes to work strapping some of the loose items to her backpack while he talks.

COWBOY

Where are you from?

JILL

East coast.

COWBOY

What's with the getup?

JILL

What? What do you - I don't know. This old thing? Ha ha.

Cowboy successfully straps all of the loose gear onto Jill's backpack for easier transport.

COWBOY

There you go. You might want to downsize a bit.

JILL

Thanks.

COWBOY

What's your name?

JILL

Me? Oh. I'm...Jill. Jill Henry.

COWBOY

Well Hank, you're alright. You amuse me like a retarded cousin.

EXT.BUS STATION PARKING LOT - DAY.

Separate from the assembled masses, a gleaming WHITE PICKUP TRUCK with a LARGE WHITE CANOPY is parked, with both front doors open.

MASON (early 30s) haggard, with heavy bags under his eyes and a week's worth of facial hair growth, is standing outside of the truck on the driver's side, talking on the CB radio.

ERIN (early 30s), a vibrant outdoorsy-athletic type, listens from the passenger side.

MASON

Mooney, do you copy? (toErin)
Where the fuck is he?

ERIN

Fifty planters and no foremen.Any
word from Benny and Jean?

MASON

Not since a couple of days ago,
from the road. They should be
here by now. (on radio) Mooney,
do you copy?

INT. PICKUP TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

MOONEY (early 30s) an affable, slightly pudgy young man, smiles as he spits tobacco juice into an empty cup. He drives into the parking lot from the opposite side of the building.

MOONEY
Roger boss, reading you loud and clear.

MASON
(O.S. - over radio)
Where the hell are you?

MOONEY
Just running some errands around town, boss.

EXT. BUS STATION PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

MASON
(to Erin)
He's going to do this all season, isn't he?

ERIN
Probably. You're adorable when you get worked up.

Mason starts to climb back into the vehicle.

MASON
(into radio)
Any idea when you'll be back?

INT. PICKUP TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

Mooney drives around the building and sees Mason closing the door behind him as he enters his truck.

MOONEY
I don't know...I might be awhile.

Mooney pulls up directly behind Mason's truck, unseen by Mason or Erin.

MASON
(O.S. - over radio)
Do you think you'll make it here
any time soon?

Mooney continues to inch his truck closer to the rear
bumper of Super's.

MOONEY
Well, I dunno...I still have a few
errands to run.

INT. MASON'S TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

MASON
(toErin)
Is he kidding me?

Mason and Erin are jolted forward by Mooney's light
rear-ending. Mason looks into his side mirror and
sees Mooney, hanging out of his window, smiling and
waving.

Erin tries unsuccessfully to contain her amusement.

MASON
Creamy.

EXT.BUS STATION - DAY.

SEVERAL TREE PLANTERS are now circled around Mooney,
who is taking roll call. They silently raise their
hands in turn as Mooney calls their names.

MOONEY
...moving on...
Darren...yup...Digger...really? Alright
sir...Madison...hmmm...check...Coach...nice
jean jacket...Jill - jesus, you're
going to bring up the rear aren't
you?... okay...Parker...hello there...and
Cowboy's here. Alright that's
everyone. So...we have a little
time yet before this show gets on
the road. Who wants to get
pregnant?

There is a long, confused pause. DARREN (early 20s) and DIGGER (early 20s), identical skids, brothers from another mother, both eventually raise their hands.

EXT. BUS STATION PARKING LOT - DAY

Mason stares blankly at maps spread over the hood of HIS TRUCK. Erin taps him on the shoulder, and points toward an approaching VOLVO WAGON.

MASON

Benny and Jean!

Erin and Mason approach the Volvo with broad smiles. Mason raises his arms for a welcoming hug.

The car screeches to a halt. JEAN (mid 20s), sexy in an unconventional manner, jumps out of the driver's seat and slams the door behind her. BENNY (mid 20s) a high-functioning pothead, emerges slowly from the passenger side.

JEAN

(to Mason)

You'd better wipe that smug face off your head because I am *not* working with that sonuvabitch!

BENNY

(deadpan)

Mean Jean everyone. She's here all week.

JEAN

(to Benny)

I hope you die on Christmas morning!

Jean storms off.

Benny walks toward Mason, who, shellshocked, has lowered his arms.

Ben reaches under Mason's arms and lifts them back into an awkward half-hug.

BENNY
(quietly into Mason's ear)
I know...I know. It's much worse
for me than it is for you.

He kisses him on the neck and slaps his ass like a
teammate.

CUT TO:

MONTAGE OF TRAVEL TO CAMP

- A) Planters loading up their ASSORTED BACKPACKS and TENTS and TARPS and PLANTING GEAR into the back of the FLEET VEHICLES in the bus station parking lot.
- B) CONVOY OF VEHICLES travelling down a DUSTY LOGGING ROAD.
- C) Vehicles parking in a makeshift BUSH CAMPSITE. There is a COOK SHACK parked next to an old renovated OFFICE BUS, both of which are powered by a nearby GENERATOR. As the last vehicles of the convoy pull into camp, planters gather their GEAR and begin to fan out in search of a temporary home.
- D) Planters begin to set up their TENTS.
- E) Cowboy sits outside of his TENT - an elaborate, completely finished setup which includes a FIRE PIT, HAMMOCK, LOUNGE CHAIR, and LARGE COOLER - drinking a BEER.
- F) Mooney sleeps on the tailgate of his TRUCK in the PARKING AREA.
- G) Jill tries to set up her MASSIVE TENT, with little success.
- H) Cara, who is trying to help set up the COMMUNAL MESS TENT, spots Cowboy lounging lazily from across camp. She cocks her head toward him, arching an eyebrow. Cowboy returns the look with a smile and a shrug.

CUT TO:

INT. OFFICE BUS - NIGHT

A makeshift plywood desk is surrounded by second-hand chairs and couches.

Mason, Erin and Benny are drinking and debriefing the events of earlier in the day.

BENNY

What about the other camp?

MASON

A bridge washed out so they had to fly in. Even if we could switch one of you out, it wouldn't be for at least another week or two.

ERIN

You're not thinking about quitting are you?

BENNY

Can't afford to. It is what it is.

CUT TO:

EXT. COWBOY'S TENT - NIGHT.

A small fire crackles as Cowboy sits alone drinking. Behind him hangs a crude, handmade sign that reads "Beer - \$2 Cash Only". Mooney approaches, half asleep.

MOONEY

Hello friend.

COWBOY

Hey! There he is. Didn't you used to be my supervisor?

MOONEY

I knew you looked familiar. Didn't you used to be one of my foremen?

COWBOY

Pull up a chair. Beer?

MOONEY

(noticing the sign)

I'm a little tapped out at the moment.

COWBOY

I'll put it on your tab, Mr. Peterson.

He tosses Mooney a fresh can from the cooler.

MOONEY

Cheers. You talk to Mason yet?

COWBOY

Not since last year.

MOONEY

Does he know you're here?

COWBOY

I've managed to make myself scarce so far.

MOONEY

Not a bad idea.

COWBOY

He seems to have his hands full with personnel issues at the moment anyway. How's the crew?

MOONEY

Gong show. That crew boss that bailed had hired a bunch of his friends, and they all bailed too. They really scraped the bottom of the barrel.

COWBOY

All rookies?

MOONEY

And a handful of coastal vets, but they're all lifers. Burnt and broken.

COWBOY

Did Robert ever tell you why the other guy quit like that at the last minute?

MOONEY

No, he was too busy pumping my tires, pretending last year never happened. I just assumed he got someone pregnant. Maybe your mom.

COWBOY

Mmm...hmm. (motioning off in the distance) What do you think about that one?

EXT. TENT NEIGHBOURHOOD - CONTINUOUS

MADISON (early 20s), a throwback to 70s rock groupies with reckless curves, is smashing errant tree branches with a FIRE AXE near her TENT.

EXT. COWBOY'S TENT - CONTINUOUS

MOONEY

A bit destructive. Lots of heart though.

COWBOY

(nodding in a different direction)
And her?

EXT. TENT AREA - CONTINUOUS

PARKER (early 20s), a Barbie doll who could easily be hanging with L.C. on "The Hills" is pulling one of MANY LARGE SUITCASES into her BRAND NEW TENT.

EXT. COWBOY'S TENT - CONTINUOUS

MOONEY

She'll be good for morale. If she doesn't quit once she realizes there's no cell service out here. (nodding toward another pair) These two are funny. Not sure if it's on purpose.

EXT. TENT AREA - CONTINUOUS

Darren and Digger are sitting in front of their ANCIENT, SHARED TENT, dressed in RIDICULOUSLY OUTDATED OUTDOOR GEAR, like they are entering the 1950 Iditarod. They are playing cat's cradle with a BOOTLACE.

EXT. COWBOY'S TENT - CONTINUOUS

COWBOY

I see you coaxed another season
out of the Coach.

EXT. TENT AREA - CONTINUOUS

There is a LARGE, MAKESHIFT TEPEE in an area somewhat separate from the rest of the tents. Sitting cross-legged outside the door-flap is the COACH (40s), who wears every day of his life on his weather-beaten face. He raises his BOTTLE OF WHISKEY to the boys.

EXT. COWBOY'S TENT - CONTINUOUS

They raise their beers to him in response.

COWBOY

Doesn't seem like much of a
paycheque.

MOONEY

Oh, I'm not on commission. I
negotiated a day rate.

COWBOY

You think Robert will honour that?

MOONEY

I got it in writing.

COWBOY

Shrewd.

Cowboy's notices Cara walking toward her tent.

COWBOY

You see that?

MOONEY
(trying not to laugh)
I saw you seeing that.

COWBOY
What's so funny?

MOONEY
Inside joke.

COWBOY
With who?

Mooney just keeps laughing.

CUT TO:

INT. COOK SHACK - NIGHT.

MOSS (mid 30s), the camp cook, who looks like he's dressed up for Hallowe'en as a Latin American revolutionary, but only has half of the costume, is making elaborate, gourmet grilled cheese sandwiches for Erin and himself.

MOSS
On Christmas morning? That's so...specific. What are they going to do?

ERIN
Not sure yet. She won't work with him. But neither of them are quitting so we'll see. We have to talk to Robert tomorrow and figure something out. Mason's losing his shit.

MOSS
You can't tell. He looks very dapper.

ERIN
He cut his hair himself.

MOSS

He's quite handsome.

ERIN

I know. You should stop saying that though. What about you, anyone catch your lazy eye?

MOSS

Me? Oh, I'll take whatever I can get.

ERIN

Just don't creep out the locals on the dance floor this year.

MOSS

What? Nooo. I don't - aw, man.

ERIN

This is the best grilled-cheese sandwich I've ever had.

MOSS

He's classically handsome, like a young Gary Cooper.

ERIN

That's enough.

MOSS

Maybe you should get him a ten-gallon hat.

ERIN

Yeah, he'd love that. Maybe we can bring Cowboy in and they can skip to work, holding hands.

MOSS

Is that why you let him come back?

ERIN

Who?

MOSS

Cowboy.

ERIN
Come back where?

MOSS
Here.

ERIN
What are you talking about?

MOSS
I'm not sure any more.

ERIN
Moss: did you see Cowboy in camp?

MOSS
(pause)
Yes.

ERIN
Are you sure?

MOSS
(pause)
Yes.

ERIN
And it wasn't just some other guy
with a Cowboy hat?

MOSS
(long pause)
No.

ERIN
Where?

Moss walks to the window and points toward a campfire
in the distance.

MOSS
He's up on that ridge, with
Mooney.

ERIN
Jesus fucking H. Christ...

MOSS

I don't know what just happened.
I shouldn't drink on an empty
stomach.

He pulls a BOTTLE OF RUM out of the FREEZER. Outside
the window, a few snowflakes begin to fall.

END OF ACT ONE

Appendix C: Second Iteration – Bible

March 2012

Hurry Up and Wait – Pilot Bible

Logline: A coming-of-age comedy that follows a diverse group of mostly twenty-somethings as they live and work together in a tree planting camp in the remote forests of the Pacific Northwest.

Premise: As an extreme, seasonal work environment, tree planting attracts an eclectic cast of characters. A few dozen hearty souls, many of them strangers, come together for three months in the spring and summer to earn money for college tuition, to pay off student debts, or just to make enough money to scrape by doing little else for the rest of the year. The experience is a right-of-passage for certain types, and ends up being not so much about the job itself as it is about the absurd microcosmic society that is created within each camp. It is considered very difficult work, capable of breaking down even the toughest individuals, both physically and mentally – but from these breakdowns emerge friendships and bonds that transcend the difficulties of the job.

Hurry Up and Wait focuses on one particularly dysfunctional crew in one particularly dysfunctional camp in one hot mess of a company. The crew is made up of almost entirely new planters – very young and very green. The one experienced planter, Tug, was previously a foreman before being fired for trying to ruin the company's reputation in an act of protest against the hypocrisy of his bosses and the industry in general. Nearly a year later he is beyond broke and forced to swallow his pride and return as a lowly laborer, back to the bottom of the totem pole. Leading Tug and the rest of the ragtag crew is Mooney, a former supervisor pulled out of retirement to fill a last-minute void.

As our story begins, Mooney and Tug reunite and embark on a what promises to be very different kind of season. Complicating matters is the fact that the current supervisor, Erin, is a fan of neither Mooney nor Tug – she was in fact running the contract that Tug tried to wreck last summer. If she had her way, he would not be allowed to work in her camp; however, it's not entirely up to her, and besides, she's busy enough constantly trying to keep the contract from unraveling to deal with him.

As with any mini-society created and populated by young men and women, romantic relationships develop and disintegrate and intertwine to propel much of the action. Cara, a cheerfully sarcastic veteran planter - new to the company - catches Tug's eye and gives him a reason to try and do more than just fly under Erin's radar; to actively do whatever he can to stick around. Of course, it's not that easy, as Cara has a preexisting connection to someone else in camp...

Much of our introduction to this world is through the eyes of Jill, a very young, naïve and inexperienced new planter who struggles with constant frustration and homesickness. We follow her and the rest of our ensemble cast as they struggle to make it through each day - some excelling at the job, others more attuned to the social dynamic, and Jill, who can't seem to get a handle on either. The pressures of the job and the camp environment, along

with questions of identity and purpose and booze- and drug-fuelled existentialism help define the arc of each character. Each of them will undergo significant changes from the beginning of the season to the end – if they can make it that far.

Format: The show will be written as a half-hour comedy, intended for HBO, Showtime, etc. Each episode will have its own story and plot but overall it will be more serialized than episodic.

Characters

Tug – mid-late twenties – prone to klutziness and has a history of putting his foot in his mouth and acting rashly, but overall he’s a hardworking guy who means well. Experienced at the job, having been a planter first and then a foreman for years; but as such, it’s also been awhile since he’s planted, and he’s a bit physically worn down at this point. Dead broke and pretty embarrassed to be back in the same camp with all of his authority stripped, he just wants to make his money and hang out with Mooney at night, drinking and talking about the good old days. Until he meets Cara, that is...her presence spurs him to get more involved and invested in the overall success of the camp, despite his every other inclination to lay low and avoid the wrath of Erin, with whom he has clashed in the recent past.

Mooney – mid-thirties – goofy fat bastard, slightly perverted, often drunk. Was a planter, a foreman and then a supervisor for years before retiring a few years back. Brought back in an emergency situation when another foreman and his crew quit just weeks before the season began. He can do this job in his sleep – and often does. While most foremen are paid on commission based on the production of their crew, Mooney worked out a deal to be paid a generous day rate. He subsequently hired a crew full of hot young women, not particularly caring if they’d be good planters or not. The only experienced planter he hired was Tug, who had worked under him as a planter and a foreman for his entire career. Mooney sets up a makeshift bar outside his camper van, earning a bit extra by overcharging the rookies for beer.

Erin – early thirties – hard-working, takes things just a bit too seriously but believes that somebody has to if this gong show isn’t going to fall apart. Very organized, competent, and doesn’t take any shit. She has high expectations and is very demanding, but her efforts are constantly thwarted by the lack of supporting personnel with her level of effort or commitment, both in those working under her and those above her in the company’s ownership. She has the added annoyance of occasionally being condescended to as a female in a traditionally male job and work environment.

Cara – early-mid twenties – vivacious, sarcastic, prone to dark humor, sometimes to the point of causing unintentional offense. New to the company but outgoing and laid back enough to roll with it. A very good planter – and pretty cocky about it – she is constantly challenging and shit-talking the other highballers, including Tug. They have some early and obvious chemistry, which is awesome for Tug cause she’s pretty hot.

Jill – late teens – super green rookie, had no idea what she was in for when she signed up for this. A high-achiever, straight-A student type, she deferred acceptance to an Ivy League school and took a gap year after high school to volunteer somewhere super-boring and cheesy, but very noble...haven’t figured it out exactly yet but the specifics don’t matter at this point, you get the idea. She has never smoked, drank, had sex, or really been on her

own in this type of environment before. That's part of why she's here in the first place, to get out on her own and experience some of these things, but she's really a fish out of water and on the verge of tears and/or quitting constantly. Tug takes her under his wing and becomes like a big brother.

Moss – late-twenties – a mousy little fella, and the camp's head cook. He is afflicted with something like Asperger's syndrome, which makes him socially awkward but a wizard in the kitchen. For some reason he seems to be the moral conscience/therapist of the camp, as everyone comes to his cook shack to talk out their problems as he serves up late night delicacies such as grilled cheese and rum and coke.

Coach – age unknown – the elder statesman of the camp, he has been planting trees since the early 1970s. By all accounts his body should have shut down long ago, but the gentle old hippie is still going strong and living off a steady diet of caffeine, cigarettes, booze, and weed. Might serve as a kind of chorus if I can make that work, and he mentors the youngins in the ways of the world – or at least his version of the way the world works, which is of course backwards, upside down and inside out.

Robert – late 40s – absentee owner of the company, shows up in camp usually only for parties or to ogle the young girls. Almost entirely useless as a resource to Erin and the rest of his management staff, except that every once in a while he will very nonchalantly come up with a perfect solution to a seemingly unsolvable problem, which only serves to infuriate those under him, since he apparently could be consistently making their jobs easier if only he'd get off his ass more than once in a blue moon.

There are many other minor characters, especially the remaining members of Mooney's crew, but I think that's probably enough for everyone to read for now.

Locations

- Ext. Cutblocks – various but all pretty much the same – clear cut logged areas that serve as primary work sites
- Ext. Bush Camp, including common area, fire pit, tent areas, Mooney's bar
- Int. Mess Tents – communal areas in camp
- Int. Cook Shack – converted ATCO trailer
- Int. Office Bus – gutted and painted school bus, converted to Erin's primary work area
- Int. seedy motels, small town bars, laundromats, coffee shops – where planters spend days off once a week
- Int. "Crummy" vehicles – converted pickup trucks with school bus style passenger transport units welded onto the back

Appendix D: Second Iteration – Outline

April 2012

THE SHIT SHOW “Pilot”

Logline: An eclectic mix of twentysomethings come together for the beginning of their tree-planting season in the remote Pacific Northwest. When Tug - a disgraced foreman fired the previous summer – returns as a lowly planter he tries to fly under the radar, but quickly gets pulled back into the chaos and drama of the bush camp life.

Teaser – We meet Tug and Jill. Welcome to the shit show. Quick look at Cara.

Act One – (D1) We meet Erin and Mooney, plus all the other characters. Show problems of camp – especially the snow issues (and Erin’s lack of a shower due to no hot water) - plus Jill’s difficulties (rude awakening) and Tug’s role as mentor. Establish Tug’s firing from previous season and reason why. Ends with Erin finding out he’s in camp and losing it. On him?

Act Two – (D2) Tug wakes up early to unfreeze pipes. Snow everywhere. Robert shows up (exposition of Erin having showered? That’s why she’s in a good mood) – debrief further snow issues. Erin brings him to find Tug, but only Mooney’s there. He appeases them, convinces her to give him another shot. Jill tries to make friends with the other rookies – no love (more rude awakening). Tug and Cara buck firewood. Erin notices? Mooney and Tug hold court at their campfire. It starts to snow – no planting again tomorrow. Erin tells Tug he can stick around if he keeps doing all the grunt work – if he doesn’t like it he can fuck off. Make it kind of ominous.

Act Three – (D3) No planting again. Tug is made Erin’s bitch. Fill up the Gerry cans, rebag the garbage, etc. He considers quitting. Jill’s tent is crushed by the weight of the snow. She is almost gone. Tug convinces her to stick around, tells her what treeplanting is really all about, and why she should stick with it. It works – she tells him she’s heard he might leave but hopes he sticks around. He still doesn’t know. One final night with Mooney – just the two of them drinking, maybe after all the others have left. Mooney convinces him that he has some shit to make up for here, and that it’s going to be hard but the only worthwhile things in life are supposed to be hard, that’s what makes them worthwhile. That’s why he liked the job in the first place, that’s why he kept coming back. Tug agrees to stay – some bigger moment to cap it off with everyone?

Tag – (D4) first day of planting, finally, but it snows and Tug finds out Cara is Erin’s sister.

Teaser:

Scene One - Ext. Cutblock – Day

Tug – mid-twenties, lean, unkempt – plants trees, no one else in sight but his three-legged dog, Numpty. As he approaches the treeline, a grizzly bear suddenly emerges from the forest. Tug backs off, reverting to his bear awareness training, but fearing for his life. It’s okay though – the bear just wants to bum a cigarette. This is a dream.

Scene Two – Ext. Bush Camp – Day (D1)

Tug wakes up, lying on against his backpack in front of his tent with Numpty asleep beside him, in the middle of a disorganized, scattered mass of other men and women, most of them around his age, lots of beards and dreadlocks and used clothing and hacky sacks and guitars. Some seem to know each other, others seem completely clueless. The camp is blanketed in a few inches of snow, but the sun is out and it seems to be melting.

Jill – late teens, one of the lost ones; superficially resembling the others (as if she’s trying to look the part but not really pulling it off) – approaches Tug. She wants to know if she’s in the right place – she can’t find her foreman or her supervisor or anyone who can tell her if she’s in the right place. She’s quite anxious and endearingly awkward. Tug is much more relaxed, and amused. He assures her she’s in the right spot; they talk briefly – turns out they’re both on the same crew. She thanks him and leaves to find a spot and set up her tent. He and Numpty walk toward the woods for a post-nap pee. On the way, he notices Cara – mid-twenties, athletic, wearing a cowboy hat (because I think that’s hot) – across the crowded tent city. She smiles; he smiles back...then walks into a hanging branch and knocks himself out.

Act One:

Scene One – Ext. Bush Camp – Day (D1)

Erin – early thirties, and the serious, competent and authoritative camp supervisor (because I think that’s hot) – backs up a truck as Mooney – early 30s, not at all serious, one of her foremen who has come out of retirement after a couple of years out of the business – stands behind the truck and guides her from the side mirror. He tells her she has plenty of room and to keep coming as she slowly backs into a temporary outhouse structure. Inside the structure is Moss – late twenties, short and cuddly, a savant chef with a variety of social disorders – the camp cook. He simply stares as the walls of the outhouse slowly bend in toward him. Outside, Mooney collapses into a fit of giggles, causing Erin to finally stop the truck. She gets out to investigate; she’s used to this kind of shit from Mooney and is not too upset – until Moss emerges from the outhouse, oblivious. Mooney can hardly breathe; Moss doesn’t understand what’s happened and goes back to his cook shack to make some grilled cheese sandwiches. Erin is already stressed because the contract has been snowed out for three days already and people are still trickling in from their regular lives. They are already far behind before a single tree has been planted. Most importantly, her other foreman has yet to show up. She tells Mooney to park the truck himself and to get her his crew list when he’s done.

Scene Two – Int. Cook Shack – Day (D1)

Cara stops in to see Moss, an old family friend. She is an experienced planter, but she is new to this particular camp, and so she tries to get all the gossip from him. It’s difficult because he doesn’t really pick up on her cues, but she gets bits and pieces.

Scene Three – Ext. Bush Camp – Continuous

An old beater pickup truck rolls into camp. Jean – the missing foreman; early twenties, rough around the edges, very unladylike, chews tobacco (because I think that’s hot) – hops out of the back with a duffle bag and thanks the driver for the lift. She heads for the cookshack.

Scene Four – Int. Cookshack – Continuous

Jean walks in like she owns the place and starts rummaging through the fridge – she says hi to Moss but ignores Cara. Erin arrives shortly thereafter, thankful that Jean has finally shown up, but also wondering where the hell she has been and why she's late. Jean doesn't really offer much of an excuse or explanation – she doesn't bend readily to authority.

Mooney joins the party, and after he and Jean quickly acknowledge one another, he delivers Erin his crew list. She takes a look – something on there makes her irate.

Scene Five – Ext. Tent City – Moments later

As Tug helps Jill set up her gear, he notices Mooney approaching. This makes him happy at first – they are old friends and he doesn't have too many of those around – but his smile fades when he sees Erin marching up as well with a head of steam. In front of Mooney and Jill and everyone else within earshot, Erin loudly curses Tug out and tells him to get the fuck out of her camp.

Act Two:

Scene One – Ext. Mooney's camper van – Night (D1)

With the majority of the planters mingling elsewhere at a large communal campfire, Tug and Mooney drink together at a small fire of their own. Jill is the only sole lonely and lost enough to approach. Mooney is his usual crass and unprofessional self; Jill's unsettling introduction to the man who will be her boss is interrupted by the arrival of Robert – mid-40s, clean cut – the owner of the company. Robert congratulates Tug and Mooney on pulling a fast one – Tug was fired the previous season for an undisclosed but unforgivable act, and blacklisted from ever working for the company again. Tug is contrite, and tries pleading for sympathy and lenience, but Mooney is defiant. He worked for Robert for long enough to have a very jaded, cynical view of the business and how Robert runs it. There is obviously no love lost, and Mooney reminds him that the conditions of his contract included a provision that gave him full autonomy over the people he could hire for his crew. If he wants to work with his old friend, Robert can't do anything about it. Mooney advises Robert to be thankful to have a couple of guys with their level experience to anchor this shit show, and go on back to the city and get back to doing nothing and collecting checks off their sweat.

After he leaves, Tug and Mooney tell a shell-shocked Jill not to worry about it, that kind of thing is par for the course in this world. Mooney brings the conversation back to work – although the camp is a hot mess right now, at least they don't have to start yet. Jill asks why; Mooney points out to her that it has started to snow again. She decides she's had enough of a day and needs to get some sleep.

Scene Two – Ext. Mooney's camper van – Day (D2)

Mooney is taking a half-naked poop behind his van when Erin approaches. He doesn't cover up as they converse. She is calmer now and wants to talk rationally about the Tug situation. She appreciates everything Mooney has been through with Robert but she can't abide someone being in camp that undermines her authority. She's worked too long and too hard to get here and she doesn't deserve to be put in the middle of whatever's going on with him and Robert. In a rare moment of sincerity, he agrees, but defends Tug. He tells her that Tug truly is sorry and has nowhere else to go. He makes a deal: he'll agree to leave Tug's fate up to her if she'll give Tug the rest of the day to prove he's worth keeping around. She says fine...where is he? Mooney replies that he's already started earning his keep.

Scene Three – Ext. camp water source – Day (D2)

Tug pours a large, unwieldy pot of steaming water into a water pump anchored to the creek bed. When it's empty, he bends down to fill it up again. When he turns around, Cara is there. She asks what he's up to and he explains that he's trying to help out around camp by unfreezing the water lines; mostly they're just getting to know one another and flirting shamelessly. He introduces her to Numpty; she wonders why he has three legs...so does Tug. I also have no idea as the writer other than I think three-legged dogs are pretty funny. They don't even care that they're missing a leg! Good times.

Scene Four – Int. Cook Shack – Day (D2)

Erin enters to find Moss doing the dishes. She's surprised to find the water working this morning, as it hasn't been the previous mornings. Moss explains Tug's role; Erin is mildly impressed. She asks if everyone's up – it's time for the morning meeting.

Scene Five – Ext. Camp fire pit – Day (D2)

Erin holds stands front and center as all of the planters gather. She lets them know they won't be planting again today due to the snow, and that they should use the time to prepare as much as they can, since they are going to have to hit the ground running. She advises that the first year planters especially to get together with their respective foremen to start learning the techniques they'll need. She introduces Jean, as she has just arrived, and Mooney, as some of his planters showed up late as well. Mooney is nowhere to be found, but no one seems surprised.

Scene Six – Ext. Camp – Day (D2)

Mooney meets with his crew. They are almost all rookies, except for Tug and The Coach – age unknown, a grizzled old lifer who has been around forever, and as such, he's a bit of a whackjob. Mooney doesn't want to remember anyone's name so he gives everyone nicknames instead, based mainly on their physical appearance and not in an especially flattering way. They are to have a training session, but Tug is going to lead it while Mooney tends to his "other responsibilities" – which is implicitly understood to be napping. The crew is comprised of guys and girls in their early twenties, all very keen and enthusiastic, and there is a great deal of nervous and sexual energy running throughout. Tug calms them down and gives them an introduction to tree-planting. He focuses a lot of his attention on Jean, as she is the only one that isn't taking the opportunity to joke around, and seems genuinely worried about doing a good job.

He sets them to a training task; as he observes, Jean approaches. They've known each other for a few years; when Jean was a rookie, Tug was her foreman, so this training session takes her back. She asks if he's going to stick around, then tells him she might not. She hedged her bets, accepting a job on another contract that is set to begin in another week. She wanted to see how things were in Erin's camp first, but now that she sees what a mess it is, she's ready to jump ship. She offers him a spot on her crew if he wants to come with.

Act Three:

Scene One – Ext. Office Bus – Night (D2)

Tug's bucking up some firewood with a chainsaw when Cara approaches. They start to flirt again but are interrupted by a ruckus from the office bus. Erin comes storming out in a flying rage. She storms off toward the cook shack, but notices Tug and screams an expletive at him before carrying on. Jean emerges from the office bus moments later, much more casual. She looks to Tug and shrugs.

Scene Two – Ext. Mooney's camper van – Night (D2)

Mooney sits around the campfire, this time with the whole crew. He feeds them beer – but runs a tab, he’s not that generous. Tug arrives, solo – tells Mooney he doesn’t think he’s going to be able to stay after all – Erin is pissed and not likely to give him any leeway, and he’s got a decent offer elsewhere. Mooney doesn’t try to convince him either way, but mentions that he thought he sensed another incentive to stay in camp – meaning Cara, who they watch returning to her tent across the way. Tug knows he’s right.

Jean joins them for one last drink/bull session before she takes off the next day. She explains the scene with Erin, says she felt bad but can’t sacrifice the success of her summer for Erin’s sake alone.

Tug takes her aside and tries to convince her to stay. I haven’t worked out the appeal he’ll use exactly at this point, but something about friendship and shit, probably. Jean says she’ll think about it and returns to the fire.

Tug remains away from the group; Jill tracks him down. She’s heard a rumor that he might be leaving, and wants to know if it’s true. He tells her he hopes not, because he has grown to appreciate her like a developmentally challenged cousin.

Scene Three – Ext. Cutblock – Day (D3)

The crews are finally out of camp and at the worksite, ready to start. Tug helps orient the rookies as Mooney waits for them to load their seedlings into their bags. Erin approaches – no one is sure exactly how she’s feeling this morning. She seeks out Tug...to thank him.

Jean had a change of heart, attributed to their chat the previous night. She agrees to let him stick around – though warns him that the leash is short. As the crew celebrates, Cara strolls by on the way to her piece of land, wondering what all the hubbub is about. Erin says that everyone is happy that they’re finally planting, and refers to Cara as “sis”. Tug does a double take. Mooney asks Erin if she’s sure they’ll be planting today. Tug confirms with Cara that he heard right – Cara is indeed Erin’s little sister. Mooney holds a palm up between him and Erin as a snowflake floats softly onto it. They look up to see ominous dark clouds directly above, just opening up to drop another snow dump on top of them. Tug and Erin, both for different reasons, simultaneously ask the world “Are you fucking kidding me?”

Appendix E: Thesis – Process Paper

May 2013

Original Pilot Script: Welcome to the Sh!tshow (Comedy; 47 pages)

Logline: A coming-of-age story following the misadventures of a diverse group of twentysomethings as they come together to create a micro-society in the remote forests of the Pacific Northwest.

Written in Spring 2012 as a comedy that ran ten or twelve pages too long, based on my own experiences working in the reforestation industry. I always felt relatively comfortable in dealing with the characters and context; however, the structure of the original pilot has never really felt that strong. The goal in this revision is to shore up that structure and add a better sense of conflict and stakes, and to find a balance between specificity to this world and universality of theme.

The new pilot – which may end up with a different title, yet to be determined – will be an hour-long comedy-drama. The major addition to the original story will be a family component – a functionally dysfunctional family related by blood and a family that is created among strangers as they bond and evolve together in a very challenging work environment. The protagonist is still Tug, who will be positioned as the (estranged) prodigal son returned to the family business his father started forty years ago.

Tug, 33 years old and at an existential crossroads in his life, with no dependents save his dog, will navigate the dynamics of working for his father after swearing to never do so again, and of leading his rag-tag crew of inexperienced rookies.

There will be a soap opera-esque element to the show as well – relationships developing and changing, hopes and betrayals. Model shows include *Greek*, *Six Feet Under* and *Northern Exposure*.

The first full outline is being developed and will be completed by June 10. The first draft will be complete by June 30; a second, revised draft will be complete by August 15 or earlier as per your instructions.

Appendix F: Thesis - First Treatment

May 2013

ACT ONE

EXT. CUT BLOCK - DAY

Tug's existential bear dream, ends on what are you doing here or similarly multi-layered question. Include dog. Tug's 30th birthday?

INT. BARGE/CHOPPER - DAWN

Wake up to reveal Tug and Coach on a barge or in a helicopter on their way to work. Indicate that this is where his life is headed and Tug is not happy about it. Looking for something else to come along to pay the bills - dream is to buy a piece of land somewhere. Maybe to buy two places: summer vacation rental and winter vacation rental - he'll live at each place in the offseason. Does it make sense for Coach to even be here? Maybe Tug should be alone. How does Coach end up on his crew? Shouldn't be too hard to fudge it.

EXT. COASTAL CUTBLOCK - DAY

Tug at the beginning of the planting day, some exposition about the act of treeplanting itself, price per tree, specs, etc.; show Tug hating his life.

EXT. LAKE - DAWN

Rollie pilots an outboard rig across the lake with several small potted plants in the boat. Make Rollie more like Mark Courtney, less like Papa Earley. Maybe Fleur is tending the weed plantation? Maybe both? Solitary works better thematically - maybe he's not lazy like Mark, he's just very take-it-as-it-comes laid-back in a frustrating way. Whistling as he works, not a care in the world.

Maybe we should skip this for a bit

EXT. SEMI-MATURE CUT-BLOCK - DAWN

Rollie carefully plants each plant between the eight foot tall pine trees. He runs black hose with spaghetti hose into each plant. Sets up a pump in the creek.

EXT. LAKE - BREAK OF DAY

Rollie pilots the now empty boat back across the lake. Passes a Tugboat pulling a boom of logs. Docks at log boom around mill.

INT. MILL OFFICES - DAY

Rollie knows everyone, greeted warmly - until he gets to Elaine, who clearly did not want to work with him again. He sees the whole lake community as a family, she sees the possibilities of expansion, very ambitious, etc. Maybe she's not that bad right off the bat, but we get hints of her not buying that Rollie can really pull off the additional volume, he's so laissez-faire about the whole thing. Maybe the first thing right off the bat is that he pushed back this meeting several times, thinking it wasn't urgent, he was hard to get a hold of from his remote, off-the-grid cabin; she was trying to get in touch about this added volume, so he's kind of shot himself in the foot.

She tells him his small company can't handle the volume of trees they need to plant - they've just acquired a new tree farm license, and they're expanding the planting contract. If they can keep up to their quotas, they might have a shot at getting the contract back next year, but if not, the 30 year relationship will be dissolved. She insinuates that he should be fine since planting is just a front for his pot business and all. Maybe it's less adversarial at first, more genuine concern on her part that the job isn't going to get done.

EXT. ROLLIE'S PROPERTY - DAY

The doors are lifted on the Quanset hut to reveal ALI (27), BATES (25) and FLEUR (55). Fleur first, flanked by the other two. REVERSE ANGLE shows the inside of the hut - cobwebs and dust everywhere, clearly being opened for the first time in awhile. It looks like a bomb went off

inside, just a mess. Maybe Ali is alone in the door-goes-up shot. Bates could be bombing around on a quad, we see him starting it up after she opens the door, she wants him to help, he pretends he can't hear her or maybe says I'll be back in a bit, leaving her alone to do all the work. Fleur comes in after, from or near the cook shack, with words of encouragement or making fun of Bates, something like that.

Fleur starts on the cookshack, towing it out with the quad. Ali and Bates start sorting through the rest of the shit.

EXT. ROLLIE'S PROPERTY - DUSK

The place looks entirely different - the cookshack is gutted and clean, the hut is half-empty, Ali and Bates load more shit onto the trailers.

Rollie shows up, they crack beers. Bates is game, Ali makes mention of the fact that there's more work to do - can get to it tomorrow - but I have other shit to do tomorrow - etc. He's got a bunch of fish, they roll out the BBQ. He explains the situation, discusses options for finding another crewboss, none of them good. Fleur tells Rollie he knows what the answer is, just doesn't want to admit it - Tug. The name is famous to Ali especially, and to some extent to Bates as well. Rollie admits there isn't really any other option. We learn that they haven't seen or spoken to one another in six or seven years. Maybe this scene is split and this is all happening over dinner and beers at dusk, with Rollie returning a bit earlier to help out. Some indication that they'd better get some rest, the contract starts tomorrow. They talk about the plan - drop off camp, pick up planters, set up camp, etc. Maybe the Fleur-Rollie discussion of he knows what he needs to do takes place later, when they're alone.

Need to establish a production quota, applied every shift, especially tough on the first shift. Also need to establish a quality threshold too which over the course of the season would threaten future continuation of the contract.

INT. SHIT MOTEL - NIGHT

Tug and Coach after work, Tug talking about what the fuck am I doing here, time to hang them up but it's so unceremonious an end to his storied career. He wants to go out with a bang. Need some sort of context here that makes it not just talking... maybe they're doing their prep shit, sharpening caulks, pre-rolling cigarettes, whatever else I can think of for that night-before ritual. Get at some of the details of Tug's past re: his dad's company.

EXT. CABIN PORCH - NIGHT

Fleur and Rollie sit smoking the peace pipe or whatever, talking about their options as detailed above (maybe do it in this scene instead, delay Ali and Bates' awareness of famous Tug coming back). They both know what he needs to do. Maybe allude to the fact that he treated Tug badly years ago, that's why he left, but without mentioning Tug's name.

INT. SHIT MOTEL - NIGHT

Tug has a phone call.

EXT. SHIT MOTEL - NIGHT

Tug answers phone at outdoor booth.

INT. ROLLIE'S CABIN - NIGHT

Rollie says "Hello son."

INT. SHIT MOTEL - NIGHT

Tug walks back in to the room where Coach wonders what the expression on Tug's face is all about. He tells him Rollie just called and offered him the job. Coach asks what he's gonna do. Tug says he's gonna go out in a blaze of glory, and take Rollie's shit company with him. Or maybe save that for the end of the first act.

SERIES OF SHOTS - VARIOUS LOCATIONS

EXT. LOGGING ROAD - DAY

Convoy of four vehicles rumbling down the road, Fleur towing the cook shack, everyone driving crummies.

EXT. CAMPSITE - DAY

The vehicles pull into the campsite.

EXT. CAMPSITE - LATER

As Rollie backs up Fleur, he waves goodbye to Ali and Bates as they pull out, crummies free of trailers.

EXT. GREYHOUND STATION - DAY

Planters wait around on their luggage in the parking lot, get excited when the crummies show up. Lots of happy reunions as they load up. Maybe cut right to this scene instead of the whole convoy shits.

EXT. CAMPSITE - DAY

Planters set up Weatherhavens and dig shitters. Second shower set up for men's/women's separation, joking about how nobody is going to use them anyway, where's the fun in that, etc. Plants Tug using the equipment to water down frozen trees, and also use it to give exposition about hypocrisy/absurdity of industry standards.

EXT. CAMPSITE - DUSK

Planters sit around drinking beers with Ali and Bates, peppering them with questions about the contract's new direction, who's going to be running the third crew, etc.

This is when Tug rolls in, hitchhiked from town, dog in tow. He tips his cap to Ali on the way by, then hits his head on a branch as he keeps looking at her instead of where he's going.

INT. OFFICE BUS - NIGHT

Rollie and Fleur discuss menu options or something when there's a knock on the bus door. Maybe he sees Fleur first, working away in the cook shack, and they have a warm embrace, nice moment, whatever. Either he asks or she just tells him where to find Rollie. Better if he doesn't know Fleur at all - kind of rips his old man about it, i.e. Where'd you find this one?... that kind of thing. Doesn't have to happen in this scene, they could just meet... he could meet everyone, just get a hint of what's to come in each new relationship but no more than a quick hello.

EXT. OFFICE BUS - NIGHT

Tug is greeted by Rollie coldly, but then much more warmly by Fleur. Reveal that he is Rollie's son (but not Fleur's). Maybe this is out by the campfire, Rollie smoking joints or drinking beers with the planters when Tug rolls up, says hey Dad or whatever. If we end the teaser on "hey Dad" maybe we don't have everyone else there until the next day... maybe he wakes up and Rollie's gone already, leaving him alone with everyone else... walks into the cookshack well after everyone else woke up and interrupts awkwardly.

ACT TWO

INT. COOK SHACK - DAY

Tug poring over applications, with Fleur. Maybe everyone else is out at a prework meeting or something.

Some mention of how Elaine had a thing for him the last time he worked here. Tug asking questions about who the forester is, Fleur answering that it's still Elaine, we get the info from his reaction.

She asks him who he has on his crew; Coach is the only answer. Where is he going to get the rest?

Somehow we get to the idea that he takes the rejects that Rollie wouldn't hire. Crew is already hired for him, from Rollie's reject pile.

Need to establish somehow that this is a motley crew.

Some of this can/should be established in earlier scenes maybe, so this one is shorter, get right to this act being intro to treeplanting for the audience and the new crew.

Not sure we need this scene.

EXT. GREYHOUND STATION - DAY

Tug picks up his crew. Quick hits of personality traits. This could be with Coach, open Act Two here instead of previous scene. Bookend it with Coach conversation, quick hits of crew sandwiched in between. At the end he could state his goal - to burn his dad's company to the ground. Feels like maybe the statement of that goal should occur at the end of act one.

--Coach - maybe he shows up last

--Dutch - Cat's cradle

--Digger - Cat's cradle

--Moss - by himself...? Tim Horton's... newspaper... drinking...?

--Lizzie - playing guitar

--Sara - last to be introduced, shit everywhere, just a mess.

EXT. CAMPSITE - DAY

Tug's crew arriving to camp, setting their personal shit up, everyone else kind of staring. Some interaction with Rollie et al makes sense in this scene.

Camp tour might be necessary here - we'll need to establish that the reefer can't be fucked with and why. Might be good to have them do a tour of camp in general, for our benefit.

EXT. CUTBLOCK - DAY

Tug teaching the crew (and us) how treeplanting works. Elaine comes by, more firmly establish crush, that they knew each other before.

EXT. CUTBLOCK - DAY

Tug and Coach walk and talk while Coach plants. Ten millionth tree might come up here. Good spot to get out details of Tug's plan, why the sabotage is appropriate (Rollie lets everything hang by a string, never prepared, too laid back, doesn't work hard, etc.) Ali might drop by here at the end. Might be nice to have something else happen. Starts raining? They watch rookies scramble for cover. Feels like a bit too soon to have another Coach scene though. Maybe some of this can come out while they're watching the crew at the bus station, but that could ruin the button of saying he's going to burn it all down. Coach and 10 millionth tree could come out at the cache with all the wide-eyed awestruck rookies.

EXT. COOK SHACK - NIGHT

Production board scene, Tug's crew wondering what it is, Bates explaining it to them/talking shit. Coins them Bed-shitters. Establish more of Bates as nemesis - he's really good at his job, and really cocky about it. And young. Pisses Tug off because that's what he could've been, or never wanted to be but Bates is so successful with it that it's doubly infuriating.

INT. MESS TENT - NIGHT

Rookies at dinner might work, talking about their day at their own table, no one will talk to them. Maybe show the cookshack first, or just Fleur bringing dinner out, then "back of the line, rookie," or something like that (from Bates). Sara bears the brunt? Fleur could serve up dinner at the beginning of the scene, but something more interesting, along the lines of her chainsawing logs for picnic tables.

DO WE NEED MORE ROLLIE/FLEUR IN THIS ACT?

INT./EXT. SOMEWHERE - SOMETIME

We need something more in here, maybe with Tug and Rollie. Campfire after work might be good - maybe it's just a prelude to the subsequent scene.

EXT. CAMP - NIGHT

Tug sabotages something. Maybe he locks keys in one of the trucks... then Ali sees him after he's done it and on his way back. Some sort of flirtatious scene here would work, like with Cara and Tug in the old pilot.

ACT THREE

EXT. CAMPSITE - DAY

Loading boxes in the morning, Ali and Bates helping each other out, Tug arriving with his crew, making them do the work. Some interaction with Ali and Bates.

Locked key is dealt with by crew member that has slimjim and criminal record. Maybe that's how we open, from Tug's POV as he heads toward the main cache.

EXT. SEMI-MATURE CUT-BLOCK - DAY

Maybe this is where we stick Fleur and her pot-growing, somehow off the heels of the previous conversation. Maybe they see her leaving, assume she's going fishing or something.

Fleur is growing pot maybe? Hears a rustle, pumps shotgun, asks aloud "Human or bear?"

EXT. CUTBLOCK - DAY

Tug's crew still not getting it, thrown in the deep end and left alone too quickly. Maybe this is where they talk about Tug and his reputation, wonder whether he is just testing them. Maybe we save that for later.

INT./EXT. TBD LOCATION - DAY

Something with Rollie and possibly Fleur too. More about Rollie and Tug's relationship though, how he sees himself as a father to all of these random strays but never with Tug.

Maybe Fleur having a heart-to-heart with Rollie, not that sentimental but you get the idea, where she kind of lays out why Tug is actually right about him and he needs to go the extra mile or something. Could start with Rollie complaining about the hard time Tug is giving him and Fleur says he's right, you are a lazy, unreliable, dishonest prick.

EXT. CUTBLOCK - DAY

Tug needs something on the block, can't get a hold of Rollie, or Rollie was supposed to meet him, or god knows what. In the midst of this, he runs into Elaine.

This is where we see they knew each other once before and there was a little crush between them. She tells him she wished he'd started his own company.

EXT. CAMPSITE - NIGHT

Something with Tug and Ali.

Also, Rollie went to town to buy a satellite dish so everyone could watch playoffs, thinking Tug would love it because he was a fan, but it turns out that was years ago and he's just annoyed (but not surprised) that a) Rollie didn't help him with whatever on the block, and b) that he thinks he still likes hockey or whichever team or whatnot.

ACT FOUR

EXT. COOK SHACK - PRE-DAWN

Fleur wakes up early, ahead of everyone, goes to start up generator (need to plant something about how old equipment is shoddy and run-down, maybe when Tug is first seeing Rollie again, asking where he found that one - i.e. Fleur - he also makes fun of the equipment: "I see you haven't upgraded any of this shit in the last ten years..." but better, obviously).

Maybe the pilot light is damaged too... need something that makes this a bigger deal... or do we? Need Fleur to have to work hard to get around sabotage.

EXT. CAMPSITE - DAY

Tug wakes up, walks to cook shack, curious as to why nothing seems to be wrong.

INT. MESS TENT - DAY

All is well, Tug is even more curious.

INT. COOK SHACK - DAY

Tug wanders in, still confused, Fleur busts past him with a giant pot of water filled from the creek a fair distance away. Cowboy coffee is on the stove, everything's good. Maybe his original sabotage involved leaving the Argo Trailer open because there are critters everywhere. Fleur took the boat home and got eggs from their chickens, a bunch of vegetables, odds and ends to make up the difference. However it's laid out, the point is that his sabotage was bigger than locking the keys in the truck but still gets solved.

EXT. CUTBLOCK - DAY

Something with Sara that indicates that she's reaching (or has reached) the end of her rope. Need to find a way to mix in other characters too - maybe this is the time for a montage, ending with Tug just hanging out/ignoring them/sleeping.

EXT. CUTBLOCK - DAY

Block's not gonna wrap, but Rollie brings Ali's crew over to make sure it happens. Tug is annoyed that his efforts to make the contract go to shit (note to implement earlier - his plan is to make it a snowball that starts rolling down hill, bit by bit things fuck up and eventually it just explodes in everyone's face).

The last piece should be Sara's, which she messed up. Maybe Bates and Ali could both bring a six-pack, send the rest of the crew home.

Something with Tug and Ali in here would be nice, happening after shit with Rollie maybe.

EXT. COACH'S VAN - NIGHT

Coach sells booze etc. like Tug in the original. When it's just the two of them left, he tells him his plan to freeze the trees so quota isn't met. More like Tug debriefs his heart-to-heart with Rollie, Coach asks him if he's changed his mind about blowing the whole thing up. Tug says no, Rollie is always talking his way out of having to actually do anything, and it's actions that matter, not words. His plan is still in effect. Hint that he just has to go bigger, but don't be explicit about it. If Coach asks him, does he say "don't worry about it" or does he hint at it in some way?

Move toward audience thinking Ali will convince Tug to behave differently, only to have him "saved" by Sara. Maybe a little bit with Ali after this, as he's about to go to bed, taking his pre-sleep piss or whatever.

ACT FIVE

EXT. CAMPSITE - DAY

Morning meeting - Rollie explains quota situation to everyone.

EXT. CUT BLOCK - DAY

Some sort of bridge to the whole thing. Maybe Tug is trying to figure out how to ruin shit, talking it out with Coach.

EXT. ROADSIDE - DAY

Skydump party where Sara gets injured - Tug predicts she'll quit for sure now. But her sticking it out kind of turns him around. This could happen as Tug is taking his time, faking a flat tire (?) - or just dropped them off to cut everyone else in, said he'd be right back, is taking forever.

This could happen at the end of the day instead of the beginning, might help condense time a bit. Coach usually sits up front with Tug, but gives up his seat to Sara so she doesn't have to be doubly uncomfortable with the crummy

ride and her broken hand (which should be all swollen like mine was).

INT. TRUCK - DAY

Tug and Sara talk - for the first time, really - on the way back to camp. At the end of the day?

EXT. CAMPSITE - DAY

Back at camp, management team talk about how they had a huge day, will have no trouble hitting the first week's quota. Reiterate that there is no playing catch-up, they have to stay ahead of the curve, otherwise shit will go haywire in a hurry. This should come from Rollie and should echo what Tug said earlier.

EXT. CAMPSITE - DAY

Something on the heels of that, maybe alone with Ali. Doesn't have to be its own scene, could just be something flirty about upcoming night off, save me a dance or some shit. Long shift, should be a good night off, looking forward to it, etc.

EXT. REEFER - NIGHT

Tug turns down the temperature below freezing.

EXT. CAMPSITE - MORNING

Tug is up early, excited about his plan, when he bumps into Sara. She's like "what are you doing up so early?" and he's like "can't sleep, last day of the shift is like Christmas morning out here. She's practicing with her left hand. He's like what are you doing? I thought you quit. She's like no I'm going to plant left-handed. He sees her practicing first maybe. The whole thing gives him pause.

EXT./INT. REEFER - MORNING

Tug opens up the reefer, finds frozen trees.

EXT. CAMPSITE - MONTAGE

Tug setting up water system. Sara sees him. So does Fleur. Then Ali later. All three girls are watching him together? Maybe.

Rollie is the last one up, wonders where everyone is, follows the setup to find the watering system. Maybe mention that no one could set it up before, too complicated or whatever, so no one has been showering. Par for the course for Rollie, says Tug, and also part of the reason it'll be so good to finish the shift and get to town.

Fleur gives Tug a knowing look when everyone is congratulating him for thawing out the trees. He isn't too happy with himself, but can't help but like it a bit.

INT./EXT. VARIOUS LOCATIONS - END OF SHIFT MONTAGE

Everyone's happy that the quota was hit and the shift is over. Tug is working well with his crew for a change. Rollie is impressed (maybe).

Everyone getting to town, stopping at hotel. Ali invites him to have a beer in her room, he says he will when he gets back, has to run an errand first (this could happen as he's dropping everyone off at the motel).

INT./EXT. ELAINE'S HOUSE - DAY

Tug rolls up, she invites him in. He asks her "what if I wanted to start my own company now?" (this is when she invites him in). She should have her hair down, be drinking a glass of wine, something like that. Is she married? Not sure.

INT./EXT. VARIOUS LOCATIONS - NIGHT

Party styles, including Sara being celebrated, and Ali looking around for Tug, maybe knocking on his door, Coach shrugging, dog in there but no Tug... something like that. And have to have Rollie in party mode since that's all he's really good for. Then we see Tug banging Elaine. Maybe he falls asleep right after that, not sure, but possibly the bear dream goes here. Need a good moment to end on, probably best if we see him banging Elaine.

Bear dream bookend (could happen just before Tug wakes up and sees Sara practicing her left-handed planting) - maybe this is where Tug tells what his new plan is, not sure if that lets too much air out of the tires. Do dramas have tags? This might be end of Act Five instead.

Appendix G: Thesis - Second Outline

June 2013

ACT ONE

EXT. CUTBLOCK - DAY

Sara's bear dream

-- self-aware dream, wonders what she's doing there

INT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT

Sara wakes up

-- in a hospital bed, abrasions around her neck. Overhears doctor talking to grandparents. They explain that her mother died about a year ago, discuss whether or not she was really trying to kill herself. Doctor asks what about her father? Off grandparents' look...

EXT. SEMI-MATURE PLANTATION - DAY

Gus intro

-- tending to his weed plantation

-- radio call from Tug asking his whereabouts, if he's going to be back to start work. Gus tells him to start without him

EXT. EQUIPMENT YARD/SHOP - DAY

Tug intro

Tug opens up the bay doors to a hot mess.

GUS TELLS TUG HE ISN'T READY TO TAKE OVER

-- Gus shows up with some supplies from town, rolls up petty cash in a distinctive rubber band, puts in away in his office trailer or office bus

-- tells Tug he isn't ready to retire until he knows for sure that Tug is ready to handle the reins

-- Tug is pissed

INT. SARA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Sara finds out she's headed to live with Gus and Tug

-- she eavesdrops for a bit then interjects as Grandparents discuss how sending her to Gus is their only option

-- needs to be in custody of a legal guardian until she's 18 in a few months

-- doesn't get to claim inheritance if she's in breach of probation in any way

EXT. CAMP SITE - DAY

The crews arrive; first look at Bates and Ali

-- Tug's crew mostly there, renewing acquaintances, setting shit up, digging shitters maybe; a few late arrivals to establish everyone just getting there

-- Bates' crew rolls in with a crummy and small convoy, pulls a suck it type move to say hello

-- Bates introduced, Ali more hinted at with just a look

EXT. CAMP SITE - LATER

Sara arrives to camp

-- Sara arrives late, dropped off by grandparents

-- Tug (and some of his crew) watches Gus meet and greet Sara upon her arrival

-- Tug assumes it's one of Bates' planters; when he finds out she's on his crew, he flips

INT. OFFICE BUS - LATER

The New Family

-- Tug is livid with Gus for making him take on a city girl rookie, tracks him to give him a piece of his mind

-- Sara overhears; they get introduced as half-brother and sister.

ACT TWO

INT. OFFICE BUS - NIGHT

Gus gives exposition of the situation with Sara

-- she's still there, scene is still more through her eyes

-- until she leaves; then Gus challenges Tug to prove his worth by taking Sara under his wing

-- gets pretty heated, Gus hits back at Tug pretty hard

EXT. CAMPFIRE - NIGHT

Tug explains situation to his crew

-- good spot for Lizzie-Clarke stuff

-- Sara struggles to put her tent up, curses at the world

-- Lizzie goes to help Sara; Digger and Dutch asks Clarke if he and Lizzie are gonna hook up again... they are only a planting couple, both have significant others back home (?) so this is just their time-out, not serious, not the "real world"

EXT. CAMP SITE - DAY

Coach wake-up

-- see different reactions from the rooster call from within tents

-- Lizzie and Clarke wake up together, after Clarke said no way in previous scene

EXT. CUTBLOCK - DAY

Pre-work with client; whole camp is there

-- new forester introduced - no one has worked with her before; she seems very no-nonsense, by-the-book - which appears to be cause for concern

-- camp vs. camp tension mounts - Bates takes the lead, starts a pissing contest of sorts

-- Sara needs to factor in somehow - first time she meets some of the crew, Lizzie maybe

-- introduction of Ali as Tug's love interest - direct face-to-face or indirect across the crowd

-- after meeting ends, Bates and Tug make a bet: highest production crew this shift wins, loser has to wash the other crew's dinner dishes for the entire season. Tug agrees to bet secretly, without any of his crew hearing (except Sara, whom he makes promise to stay quiet - she doesn't give a fuck anyway)

EXT. CUTBLOCK - DAY

Sara and Tug

-- tries to teach her how to plant after everyone else is cut in

-- doesn't go well - neither of them wants to be there, or to have much to do with the other

EXT. COOK SHACK - DAY

Production board

-- back at camp, pre-dinner, Sara stops at production board, wonders why her name is on it; Tug explains, but she doesn't really give a shit

-- Bates walks up, bust chops. Tug is angry, Sara could give a fuck

EXT. CAMP SITE - NIGHT

Tug and Ali meet cute

-- Tug heads back to his tent, alone and annoyed, muttering to himself - runs into Ali

-- first real meeting (meet-cute)

-- leaves him feeling better about life and potential prospects for the season

INT. OFFICE BUS - NIGHT

Sara scams Gus

-- there when Gus gets there, which is not allowed, she plays innocent, pretends she didn't know (broke into bus from the top maybe?)

-- plays homesick card, asks to use satellite phone

-- calls some friend at home, gives her honest assessment of the situation and of Gus and Tug

-- Tug overhears, knows she stole money, but doesn't bust her

ACT THREE

EXT. CUTBLOCK - DAY

Tug's Rah-Rah speech

-- motivational speech to rile them up - he's really wants to beat Bates

-- they're a bit weirded out - he's not usually this rah-rah, delivered through Sara-Lizzie conversation

-- something specific with Sara, Tug basically telling her she's dead weight, needs to pick it up, she's like yeah yeah yeah

-- Gus on the radio, something that indicates he's at the weed plantation, right next door

EXT. CUTBLOCK - DAY

Sara finds Gus' weed

-- Sara is chilling by a creek at the back of her piece, sun tanning or something, reading a book. She notices a pump a little ways down, gets curious, follows the sound and the hoses

EXT. SEMI-MATURE PLANTATION - DAY

-- Sara continues to follow the mystery, follows hoses, finally finds Gus and his plantation

-- shotgun "friend or foe" moment

-- could be some kind of bonding moment that helps turn her around

EXT. COOK SHACK - DAY

Tug gets angry

-- Tug watches as Gus puts the numbers up; he is happy with his until he sees what Bates' crew did. He storms off to blow off some steam

INT. MESS TENT - DAY

-- Sara hears the chainsaw fire up as she's eating dinner, the rest of Tug's crew knows he's upset as apparently that's how he deals with it

EXT. CAMP SITE - DAY

-- Tug's chainsaw party is interrupted by Ali, flirtatious scene makes him feel better

EXT. CAMP SITE - DAY

-- in the aftermath of above, find out from Bates that Ali is his sister. Sara has to factor in somehow

ACT FOUR

SARA AND MOONEY AFTER HE CATCHES HER STEALING

RAH-RAH SPEECH - WEIRD FOR CREW, STILL DON'T KNOW HE MADE BET

-- prelude of some sort with Bates egging him on over the radio - talking about picking up dishwashing gloves for him on day off

SARA FINDS WEED PLANTATION

CAMPFIRE - CREW IS STILL LOSING TO BATES

-- Sara tries to sell weed, but they're stocked up and her weed is shit

-- people complain about aches and pains, she brings out pills

SARA STASHES - MOONEY CATCHES HER

-- radios Gus, needs to talk to him about her when they get back to camp

FLAT TIRE - MOONEY AND SARA HAVE TO WAIT

-- heart to heart - she decides to stick it out on his terms

RETURN TO CAMP - GUS FIRES SARA

-- needs to be someone else that picks them up besides Gus

BEGINNING OF ACT FIVE IS MOONEY TELLING SARA TO WAIT BY HER TENT, HE'LL HANDLE IT

EXT. CUTBLOCK - DAY

-- Sara hanging out at cache when Lizzie and maybe a few other planters show up

-- someone's feet or back or wrist or knees is killing them when they get there, but they can't stop because of fear of Tug's wrath. Sara tells them she overheard Bates and Tug

talking about the bet last night - first the crew has heard of it

-- Sara doesn't give a shit, she's not washing anyone's dishes. But she does provide pills for the planter that's in pain (should see her taking them earlier maybe)

EXT. CUTBLOCK - DAY

-- Tug finds Sara lounging, asks her numbers so far, she tells him something high, he's surprised, suspicious. She heads back to the cache

EXT. TREELINE - DAY

-- Lizzie and Clarke are banging, hear something, shoosh each other

-- see Tug looking for something, like he's tracking a deer or whatever

-- finds a bunch of trees dumped under a stump

-- swears a lot, doesn't see Lizzie or Clarke, but they see him

ACT FIVE

INT. OFFICE BUS - NIGHT

-- Tug tells Gus he has to fire Sara. He's pissed that he's losing the bet, she's dead weight, he drops her and his crew average is better than Bates' (looking for a loophole to still win bet). Tells him about the stashing and the pills

-- Gus refuses, Tug's pissed. Compromise reached: Gus says if Sara doesn't hit a certain number by the end of the next day, she's fired

-- Gus is actually kind of pissed at the whole stashing situation, feels a bit betrayed and conned by Sara, so he is the one who settles on the amount of trees she has to plant

EXT. CAMP SITE - MORNING

-- everyone woken up by Tug on the chainsaw - gets them up early for the big final day of the shift, they have to go huge to catch up and beat Bates so they leave for the block early

-- Ali is the only one up from Bates' crew, she tries to flirt with Tug about the upcoming night off, but he kind of blows her off

-- Clarke sees, asks what's up, Tug says he's kind of revolted/turned on that she's Bates' sister, doesn't know if he wants to go down that road

EXT. CAMP SITE - SOMEWHERE - MORNING

-- Bates somehow overhears or finds out about Sara's quota, starts ripping into her

-- Tug stands up for her - if Bates says anything sexually creepy, Tug can tell him if anyone is banging anyone's sister, I'm banging yours

EXT. CUTBLOCK - DAY

-- Sara thanks Tug, which isn't easy for her; Tug says it wasn't a big deal, more about Bates than her anyway

-- planting montage, everyone going hard, including Sara for the first time

-- planters all having big days, checking in with Sara, she's almost there, but needs another hundred

-- Tug plans to just keep planting until they hit their mark, they move to another part of the block nearby to find Bates already there, finished planting it out

-- no more room to plant, Bates wins the bet (after letting Tug's crew think they'd won it)

-- Tug's crew dejected, Tug and Sara most of all

EXT. COOK SHACK - EVENING

-- Sara walks by the production board, does a double-take when she sees her numbers have been fudged to pretend she got over 1000, even though Tug explained earlier how bad it is to overclaim

-- Gus congratulates her, says he's glad she turned it around (maybe also that he never would've fired her anyway)

INT. MESS TENT - NIGHT

-- Bates brings over his dishes, gloating, makes Sara do his

-- Sara somehow gets him to say that it's these dishes and only these dishes that have to be washed

-- agrees to do them all, to everyone's surprise

EXT. CAMP CREEK - NIGHT

-- Sara dumps all dishes into the creek

EXT. CAMPSITE - NIGHT

-- party montage

-- find out Lizzie is pregnant

INT. OFFICE BUS - NIGHT

-- Sara goes to get Gus to join the party, notices some pills he's taking or something, reveals that he's sick - brain tumor maybe - she figures out what it is because she knew someone in the mental hospital that had the same condition

Appendix H: Thesis - Outline Revisions and Notes

August 2013

THE FOREST FOR THE TREES - OUTLINE

ACT ONE

1. EXT. FORESTRY (SHOULD BE LOGGING) CUTBLOCK - DAY: Sara's bear dream

-- no major changes necessary

2. INT. TREATMENT HOUSE (BE CLEARER, USE EST. SHOT) - DAY: Sara gets dropped off

-- use establishing shot first, make clear the setting

3. INT. PSYCHIATRIC FACILITY - DAY: Sara takes tour, sets fire.

-- needs to be less overt, more of an "accident" - no proof or witnesses that it was her

4. INT. DOCTOR BERGSTROM'S OFFICE - DAY: Sara steals keys

-- no major changes necessary

5. INT. PSYCHIATRIC FACILITY - PHARMACY - DAY: Sara steals pills

-- no major changes necessary

6. EXT. PSYCHIATRIC FACILITY - NIGHT: Ross' pick Sara up after she's kicked out; mention Gus

-- this should be cut short, just to show the aftermath, then we should see Sara and the Ross' getting home, the argument about Gus and treeplanting ongoing as she picks up her iPod at the end to ask what the fuck is treeplanting

7. EXT. FOREST - DAY: Gus takes a shit

-- this can change to Gus watching old home movies of him treeplanting, Mooney as a baby being all adorable and shit

8. EXT. FOREST - CREEKSIDE - DAY: Gus tends to his water pump.

-- don't need this scene

9. INT. SARA'S ROOM - NIGHT: Sara on iPad, overhears Ross' arguing; mention treeplanting

-- see previous note about merging this with preceeding scene at Ross residence

10-17. EXT. CUTBLOCK - DAY: Mooney plants, hates it

-- don't need any of this, but we should introduce Mooney at the end of the Gus home movie scene. He should be confused and a little insulting toward Gus - what the fuck are you watching this shit for, are you crying, Jesus Dad, get a hold of yourself. Then we can get right into merger stuff - might be good to have it as two separate scenes, so there is separation between this sad nostalgic moment and the merger reveal. Mooney could say he's going out back to lock up or get the trailer ready or whatever; Gus comes out to join him and this is where the merger conversation takes place.

18. MONTAGE - VARIOUS: Sara traveling out west with Mrs. Ross; Mooney coming home; Gus getting prepped for the season

-- no major changes necessary; minor tweaks to Sara's character, some cuts may be worth exploring

19. EXT. GUS' HOUSE - BACK PORCH - NIGHT: Gus tells Mooney he merged with Southern Silviculture, new forester; doesn't get to tell him "something else"

-- this scene should have already happened at the tail end of 17 above

20. EXT. FLEABAG MOTEL - NIGHT: Ross rental BMW pulls into parking lot

-- no major changes necessary

21. INT. MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT: Sara wants sushi, Mrs. Ross tries to have heart to heart; Sara leaves

-- no major changes necessary; look at character stuff, figure out who Sara really is

22. EXT. MOTEL - NIGHT: Sara on phone, saying she can ride out three months then never see grandparents again

-- minor character tweaks worth exploring

23. INT. MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT: Mrs. Ross listens in, unimpressed.

-- no major changes necessary

24. EXT. CAMP SITE - DAY: Gus and Mooney arrive at camp, Digger and Dutch are first planters to show up

-- no major changes necessary

25. EXT. CAMP SITE - DAY: More planters arrive

-- no major changes necessary; look at character depictions, do some rounding out if possible, add Coach to the mix

26. EXT. CAMP SITE - DAY: Camp is fully set up.

27. EXT. CAMP SITE - SPARSELY WOODED AREA - DAY: Mooney's crew digs shitters and discuss merger, watch as Bates arrives; Mrs. Ross and Sara roll up right after. Bates' crew arrives.

-- no major changes necessary

28. INT. BMW - DAY: Sara watches Mrs. Ross introduce herself to Gus.

-- no major changes necessary

29. EXT. CAMP SITE - SPARSELY WOODED AREA - DAY: Mooney's crew watches Mrs. Ross, Sara and Gus. Mooney confronts Gus, finds out Sara is on his crew

-- no major changes necessary

30. EXT. CAMP SITE - PARKING LOT - DUSK: Mrs. Ross says goodbye.

-- no major changes necessary

31. EXT. CAMP SITE - TENT AREA - DUSK: Sara picks out tent site, can't figure out tent

-- no major changes necessary

32. INT. OLD SCHOOL BUS - NIGHT: Mooney yells at Gus about having a rookie on his crew; finds out Sara is Gus' daughter/his sister

-- no major changes necessary; maybe some minor character stuff in this and the following scene

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

1. INT. OFFICE BUS - NIGHT: Gus explains how he has a daughter and none of them knew. Sara exits, Gus challenges Mooney to turn her into a planter

-- no major changes necessary, definitely could use a few minor tweaks

2. EXT. OFFICE BUS - NIGHT: Sara eavesdrops, runs into Mooney then Dutch and Digger

-- no major changes necessary, character stuff could be tweaked

3. EXT. CAMP SITE - FIRE PIT - NIGHT: Lizzie sings

-- no major changes necessary

4. EXT. CAMP SITE - TENT AREA - NIGHT: Sara tries again to put her tent up

-- no major changes necessary

5. EXT. CAMP SITE - FIRE PIT - NIGHT: Mooney joins Clarke at fire, debriefs Sara situation sort of.

-- worth looking at condensing any of this?

6. EXT. CAMP SITE - TENT AREA - NIGHT: Ali arrives, helps Sara

-- should be a place to re-introduce Sara's lighter. She's playing with it as she stares at her un-erected tent when Ali happens by, asks her if she's going to burn the whole place down.

7. EXT. CAMP SITE - FIRE PIT - NIGHT: Mooney notices Ali

-- no major changes necessary

8. EXT. CAMP SITE - TENT AREA - NIGHT: Gus arrives, tries to have father-daughter bonding.

-- Gus should give her something to keep her warm, which then is part of the reason she slept in. Leads to Mooney and Gus arguing over how to treat her: Gus coddles too much, Mooney is too harsh.

9. EXT. CAMP SITE - RIDGE - DAWN: Coach does wake-up

-- no major changes necessary

10-14. INT. DIFFERENT TENTS - DAWN: Everyone wakes up.

-- might be able to cut this if need be, just show everyone stumbling toward the cook shack and show Sara sleeping

15. EXT. CAMP SITE - OUTSIDE COOK SHACK - MORNING: Mooney greets Coach, eyeballs Ali and Bates.

-- greeting Coach not necessary, or should at least be changed since the coastal planting stuff is gone now. Coach character work might help here.

16. INT. MESS TENT - MORNING: Mooney's crew gets pushed out of lunch table by Bates' crew

-- no major changes necessary; need to do a bit of character work with Bates

17. EXT. CAMP SITE - MORNING: Bates needles Mooney; bet is made, Mooney yells at his own crew

-- no major changes necessary

18. INT. SARA'S TENT - MORNING: Sara wakes up

-- no major changes necessary

19. EXT. SARA'S TENT - MORNING: Sara gets out, sees trucks peeling away

-- no major changes necessary; consider expanding the plot of this act, tough to do but we'll see

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

1. INT./EXT. GUS' PICKUP TRUCK - LOGGING ROAD - DAY: Gus drives Sara to the block, bit of a heart to heart

-- could use better transition at the end as he drops her off to Mooney

2. EXT. CUTBLOCK - DAY: Mooney teaches Sara the basics of planting, with little patience, then leaves her to fend for herself

-- no major changes necessary

3. MONTAGE - VARIOUS: Mooney's crew planting; Clarke and Lizzie bang, Sara suntans

-- no major changes necessary; minor character stuff can be tweaked

4. EXT. CUTBLOCK - DAY: Mooney's crew piles into vehicles to go back to camp

-- no major changes necessary; tweak it a bit to show how everyone is beat as they're not back into planting shape yet (which can be developed further around the campfire later)

5. EXT. CAMP SITE - DUSK: Mooney and Sara at production board; Bates rips them as he's already way ahead in the bet

-- no major changes necessary

6. INT. MESS TENT - NIGHT: Sara grossed out by camp food; sound of Mooney on chainsaw is heard

-- no major changes necessary

7. EXT. CAMP SITE - WOODED AREA - NIGHT: Mooney and Ali chainsaw meet-cute

-- no major changes necessary

8. INT. OFFICE BUS - NIGHT: Sara cons Gus into letting her use satellite phone, steals money.

-- no major changes necessary

-- *GUS IS SOFTER WITH HER THAN HE IS WITH MOONEY (?)*

9-10. EXT. CAMP SITE - SECLUDED AREA - NIGHT: Sara on phone, telling friend that she's out of here first chance she gets. Reveal Mooney having heard her

-- no major changes necessary; minor character tweaks for Sara when she's talking to her friends might be good - less "bitch" talk

-- also this could be Act Two break potentially, but not sure what the structure of Act Three would look like

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

1. EXT. CAMP SITE - SECLUDED AREA - NIGHT: Sara busted by Mooney; turns out he doesn't really care - happy to know she's leaving

-- see above; no major changes

2. EXT. CAMP SITE - MORNING: Coach rooster call

-- no major changes necessary, can cut but don't want to. Rooster call can change a bit each time.

3. EXT. SARA'S TENT - MORNING: Sara wakes up annoyed

-- no major changes necessary

4. EXT. CUTBLOCK - MORNING: Mooney gives rah-rah speech, crew confused. Sara learns about honor system of claiming

-- no major changes necessary

5. EXT. CUTBLOCK - DAY: Sara stashes

-- no major changes necessary

6. EXT. CAMP SITE - PARKING LOT - NIGHT: Sara gives Mooney tallies, surprisingly high.

-- no major changes necessary

-- progression might feel better if this is actually day three

7. EXT. CAMP SITE - FIRE PIT - NIGHT: Debrief among crew members. Sara gets pill idea

-- no major changes necessary

8. EXT. SARA'S TENT - NIGHT: Sara gets pills; Digger and Dutch hit on her, she sells them painkillers

-- no major changes necessary

9. EXT. CAMP SITE - HILL TOP (REPLACE RIDGE IN EARLIER VERSION) - MORNING: Coach wake-up routine

-- no major changes necessary; might be good to change it up

10. INT. SARA'S TENT - MORNING: Sara wakes up, with pills and money

-- no major changes necessary

11. EXT. CUTBLOCK - DAY: Sara suntans and reads in the back of her land (more elaborate set-up might be nice). Mooney arrives with stashing evidence

-- no major changes necessary

12-16. EXT. CUTBLOCK - ROADSIDE - DUSK: Mooney calls Gus on the radio, interrupted by Bates, says he needs to talk to him about Sara, in person. Sara overhears; points out flat tire

This is where the big changes start. Radio conversation can still happen, but maybe it's just Bates giving Mooney the gears again. The confrontation about Sara can happen back at camp, in the office bus. As it gets heated, Gus pulls Mooney out, leaving Sara alone in the bus to snoop around, look for more shit to steal. That's when she finds the cancer pills, and we have our act out. Come back for Act Five with her in a daze, totally different demeanor, facade gone. She can wake up the whole crew early for the last day of the shift, goal is no longer 1000 trees for her, it's beating Bates as a crew.

17. EXT. CUTBLOCK - ROADSIDE - DAY: Ali arrives in Gus' truck with spare tire. Takes rest of crew home, leaving Mooney and Sara

-- probably going to cut this

18. EXT. CUTBLOCK - ROADSIDE - NIGHT: Sara and Mooney have heart to heart about her mother's death. Starts to feel for her

Need to find a place for something like this somewhere in the new version, possibly in the final Act, as Mooney still appears unwilling to compromise on her behalf (thinks he could still be being conned by her, as anyone can try for one day, but he needs her to give er shits the whole season). Maybe The Machine should come back and Mooney has to give him to Bates' crew. Machine should be a brick shithouse but borderline autistic.

19. EXT. CAMP SITE - OUTSIDE OFFICE BUS - NIGHT: Sara and Mooney return to find Gus wants her fired

-- new act four break should be Sara finding out Gus has cancer after being left alone in the bus

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

1. EXT. CAMP SITE - OUTSIDE OFFICE BUS - NIGHT: Sara and Mooney work out a deal whereby Sara can stay if she proves she really wants to by planting 1000 trees the next day

-- going to cut this

2. EXT. OFFICE BUS - NIGHT: Sara and Mooney debrief - neither has any clue how they're going to make this happen

-- this too

3-6. TENTS - Sara orchestrates early wake-up

-- this can stay in some form, it's just that Sara's the one that makes this call, without any assistance from Mooney.

7. INT. COOK SHACK - SUNRISE: Moss is perplexed to find Mooney's crew awake already

-- this can probably stay, but we might need one more Moss beat to make it worth our while - need to figure out his character a bit more

- to that end: WE NEED TO PUT IN THE COWBOY COFFEE SCENE SOMEWHERE IN ACT TWO OR THREE

8. EXT. CAMP SITE - HILL TOP - SUNRISE: Coach's wake-up call is interrupted by Mooney's crew on their way to trucks.

-- can stay in some form

9. EXT. CUTBLOCK - DAWN: Mooney comes clean about bet

SHOULD HAVE SOMETHING WHERE SARA IS ACTUALLY THE ONE WHO SELLS HIM OUT TO THE REST OF THE CREW WITH REGARD TO THE BET... NOT SURE HOW TO ORCHESTRATE THAT IF SHE'S NOT UP FOR DAY ONE - COULD BE THE ACT TWO OR THREE BREAK IF WE RECONFIGURE THINGS

10. EXT. CUTBLOCK - DAWN: Mooney fixes Sara's trees, teaches Sara how to plant, for real

-- can stay in some form; add heart to heart stuff from earlier in this moment

COULD PLANT SOMETHING EARLIER WHERE HE SAYS IT'S NOT HIS JOB TO FIX TREES, SO DON'T EXPECT THAT SHIT

11-14. EXT. CUTBLOCK - DAY: Mooney's crew planting hard

-- can stay in some form

15. EXT. CUTBLOCK - ROADSIDE - DAY: early evening cache break, crew debriefs. Mooney sees them sitting, puts bags on. Crew gets back up

-- not sure this needs to be there

16. EXT. CUTBLOCK - SARA'S PIECE - DAY: Crew cattle plants Sara's piece to wrap block

-- can stay in some form

17. EXT. CUTBLOCK - ROADSIDE - DUSK: Crew loads up for next block, creamshow

-- no major changes necessary

18. INT./EXT. MOONEY'S TRUCK/LOGGING ROAD - DUSK: Mooney's crew arrives to find Bates already at creamshow. Confronts him angrily, Sara intervenes

-- no major changes necessary

19. EXT. CAMP SITE - NIGHT: Back at camp, Mooney's crew ignores Moss

-- no major changes necessary

20. INT. MESS TENT - NIGHT: Bates declares himself winner of bet; Sara offers to do all of the dishes

-- no major changes necessary

21. EXT. CAMP SITE - OUTSIDE COOK SHACK - NIGHT: Sara lights Bates' crew's dishes on fire

-- no major changes necessary besides the following:

SHE SHOULD SAVE ALI'S MAYBE, LET MOONEY GIVE THEM BACK TO HER. ALSO SHE SHOULD TOSS LIGHTER IN THE FIRE, MIGHT BE NICE IF IT ONCE BELONGED TO THE DRUNK DRIVER THAT KILLED HER MOTHER AND SHE'S BEEN PLAYING WITH IT THE WHOLE EPISODE, LIKE SHE'S OBSESSED WITH FIRE BUT REALLY IT'S WITH THIS DUDE. MAYBE MOM BURNED TO DEATH? MIGHT BE TOO DARK. BODY WAS REALLY BADLY BURNT SO SHE COULDN'T HAVE AN OPEN CASKET.

Bates loses shit; Mooney loves it. Gus doesn't mind either. Mooney finds out Ali is Bates' ex.

-- still no major changes necessary, besides the following

THE ALI REVEAL NEEDS TO BE EARLIER. MAYBE IT COMES FROM SARA IN AN ARGUMENT BETWEEN THEM.

22. SERIES OF SHOTS: Party that night, then day-off activities. Suggest Lizzie might be pregnant and Gus has cancer.

-- some tweaks needed here for sure, but the idea of a closing montage can work well, and maybe a tag with the bear dream bookend as well.

Appendix I: Scene Comparison – Three Versions

Comedy Version - Cold Open - May 2012

FADE IN:

EXT. CLEAR CUT FOREST - DAY.

A large expanse of logged forest is bounded by the remaining treeline and a lone, winding logging road.

As a hard rain falls from a dark gray sky, one solitary tree planter toils away, shivering but in constant motion.

TUG - 27, lean and athletic, scraggly brown hair tucked under a bomber hat, water beading on his beard and wool sweater - looks pained but resigned to suffer through it.

He takes a seedling from the planting bags buckled around his waist, opens a hole with his shovel, stuffs the tree in, and kicks the hole closed - all in one fluid motion.

He reaches for another tree and keeps moving, singing aloud to his iPod.

TUG

Lookin' out on the morning rain...
ah-oo...I used to feel so
uninspired... ah-oo...And when I
knew I had to face another day...
ah-ooo... Lord it made me feel so
tired...

He looks up, and stops dead in his tracks. He sees a large GRIZZLY BEAR emerging from the edge of the forest.

TUG (CONT'D)

Whoa bear!!!

He backs away slowly, careful not to look the bear in the eyes. He raises his hands and shovel above his head.

TUG (CONT'D)

Easy big fella...

The Grizzly Bear stops and tilts his head. Tug finds a stump to climb onto, making himself as tall as possible.

GRIZZLY BEAR
What the hell are you supposed to
be?

Tug freezes. His arms are still above his head.

TUG
I'm...uh...trying to look
bigger... It's part of
the..."Bear Aware" training...

GRIZZLY BEAR
"Bear Aware"? That's cute. So
listen...you got any smokes?

EXT. BUS STATION PARKING LOT - NORTHERN ONE HORSE TOWN -
DAY (D1)

Tug wakes up, laying on a tattered duffle bag, with his
scrappy three-legged mutt - NUMPTY - resting across his
lap.

Comedy-Drama Version - Opening Scene - August 2013

ACT ONE

EXT. LOGGING CUTBLOCK - DAY

SARA (17) - sullen and attractive beyond her years, her
hair, clothing and makeup indicating both money and taste -
looks around, confused.

She is standing in the middle of a cutblock - a logged
section of forest land. She is alone; the only signs of
human activity are the large cut tree stumps and logging
debris, known as slash, that surrounds her.

In the distance, the cutblock boundary looms in the form of
hundred-foot pine and spruce trees. She is dressed more for
a night out in the city than for this rugged, raw
environment.

SARA
What the fuck...?

As if in response, a GRIZZLY BEAR emerges from the treeline and begins lumbering slowly toward her.

Sara freezes, her eyes growing wider by the moment. The Bear advances, then stands on its hind legs, towering over her.

GRIZZLY BEAR
You sure you're supposed to be
here?

INT. DOCTOR'S WAITING ROOM - DAY

Sara opens her eyes. She is dressed the same, but now seated outside an office. The door reads: Dr. Bergstrom,
MD, PhD.